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THE POT OF GOLD

Flashes of Silence

By

GEORGE CLARKE PECK

"Macaulay has improved of late—flashes of silence."
—*Sydney Smith*

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I

FLASHES OF SILENCE

THE phrase being borrowed for the occasion, I feel free to praise it extravagantly if I choose, as in the case of a neighbor's automobile, chrysanthemum, or good looks. The longer I consider it the keener my delight in it. Held to the light, like a diamond, each facet seems to fling back a different color. I'd rather be the author of such a phrase than hold patent rights on a new piston ring. "Flashes of silence" indeed! With the first word as applied to wit, anger, sympathy, insight, truth, self-revelation I might claim familiarity, but never with respect to silence. Not until I chanced upon Sydney Smith's employment of it in his half-caustic, half-mocking fashion. "Macaulay has improved of late—flashes of silence." Obviously, the critic was thinking in terms of the other's auditors. Even as opulent a mind as Macaulay's may become tiresome in the unwinding. Dialogue narrowed into monologue when Macaulay was present. Ossa piled upon Pelion until one grew dizzy with watching the verbal mountain-builder. God be thanked for

an instant's respite to the beholder, that he may catch his breath. Thus, Sydney Smith, concerning the man whom he described as "a book in breeches."

I am thinking, however, of the value to the soul itself of "flashes of silence." Ours is a strident age, the noisiest yet. What with multifarious street sounds, and talking machines screaming from half the houses on the block, and hawkers of everything from vegetables to extra editions, and the air rent with declamations, it is almost impossible to possess one's own soul in quietness. Life for the multitude is a sort of protracted Halloween or Mardi Gras Prophetically, the year begins with a blast of every sort of noise available—whistles, pistols, horns, yells, jazz bands, and what not; and, unless something breaks the racket, calms not until time to say "Happy New Year" again. We are so inured to noise that the rich, sweet silence of forest or sea keeps us awake. I have known vacationists to expedite their return to city-bedlam because the stillness of the country had got on their nerves. In view of which physical stridency, matched too oft by clamors in the soul itself, I sometimes wonder that so much really good work is accomplished and so many high moods are enjoyed.

Speaking for himself, Thomas A. Edison says that moderate deafness is not an unmixed affliction. When an aurist called upon the famous inventor, begging an opportunity to effect a speedy cure, Edison demurred. "I am afraid you might succeed," he replied. And then, his eyes twinkling and the corners of his mouth twitching drolly, he added: "Supposing you *did* cure me? Think of the lot of stuff I'd have to listen to that I don't want to hear. To be a little deaf has its advantages." There's a tradition to the effect that Herbert Spencer equipped himself with a couple of earplugs with which he might, upon due occasion, shut out the chatter of the table at which he ate his meals. Rather churlish of him, no doubt, and quite embarrassing to the other boarders. Yet the soul of a man has a few rights not to be trifled with, especially when great themes are gendering and high voices are calling. The world with its jangle of sounds is altogether "too much with us, late and soon." Not only "getting and spending," but hurrying and chattering, "we lay waste our powers." Too small space is left for what the French expressively call "making a soul." Too little honor nowadays for those "flashes of silence" out of whose clean, cool depths break both exalting dream and ennobling deed.

In a fervid tribute to the three or four great British soldiers he had known Kipling stresses their extraordinary reserves and significant quietness. But anybody can make his own list: William the Silent, Napoleon, Wellington, Kitchener, Roberts, Grant, and Foch—all claiming the real leader's right of sanctuary; taciturn almost, quiet to the verge of coldness, while their campaigns were yeasting. Once, when a bystander rushed into the burly of a London street to rescue the Iron Duke, then an old man, and, having received a shy word of gratitude, fell into eulogy, Wellington came back, half-embarrassed: "Thank you for your kindness, but don't be a —— fool." Joseph Jefferson used to chuckle over a somewhat similar personal reminiscence of General Grant. But why pick the military for instances? You shall find the same mood in almost all the world's great *producers*. Tennyson, in the aerie of his favorite house; Macaulay locked into his room with a few crackers and a pitcher of water; Goethe wishing he could build a Chinese wall around his inner self; Thoreau sequestering himself in the cool quiet of Walden Pond; Lincoln fleeing to the solitude of his consecrating purpose; Gladstone, in the forest at Hawarden, his ax ringing challenge to all intruders upon his privacy—to name just a

few from a list too long for cataloguing—were frankly claiming the ministries of silence.

Best work may be *born* on the thoroughfare, but it is not *conceived* there. In the dark womb of his own vigil Beethoven's Ninth Symphony had its inception; and Wesley's transfiguring passion of redemption, and Roosevelt's program of national honesty. For an hour or more, each working day, after lunch, President Coolidge insists upon being left undisturbed. Sleep, perhaps, and needed relaxation? Nothing else? How large portion of the daily respite is spent in silent recharging of the batteries of courage, and listening for the clarion voices of duty, I do not think the man would tell. Ornithologists say that ostrich eggs hatch in the sun. No call for a brooding wing. It may be that certain freak human enterprises are like that. Most, however, need the warm feathers of the mother—like the tiny, yellow thing, in a cage at my window, sitting patient, almost unwinking, day after day, till advent. *Flashes* of silence: nay, long, fruitful *reaches* of silence, till the nest is empty because its brood has found wing and voice. I wonder if Jesus was thinking of that also when he called attention to the birds? Certain it is that he never tried to get on without seasons of solitude. The magnitude of his task made them indis-

pensable. In the sanctuary of a welcoming home, on Mount Olivet often, in the desert, under the olive trees of Gethsemane, men found —or missed—him gathering fresh supplies of oil and wine for his redemption.

Or if, for a moment, you separate a man's task from the man himself, think of the need of his own soul for "flashes of silence." Lacking such "filling stations" of power, life goes dead on the road. In one of his dark moods Shelley sang dismally of silence as "foremost of the gloomy winged guardians of one abyss where life and truth and love are swallowed up." On the contrary, silence is chief guardian of the deeps out of which life and truth and love are born. These are the real births of which our nervous, syncopated, jazz age is cheating us. Life is disappointing because it is shallow. No deeps above or below! Martha-like, we are careful and troubled about so *many* things, that we are forgetting the *one* thing needful. Asked once why she seemed to shun folks, Emily Dickinson replied: "They talk of hallowed things *aloud*, and embarrass my dog. He and I don't object to them if they'll exist on their side. . . . Carlo would please you: he is dumb and brave." She "deliberately decided to clear a space of privacy large enough to walk around in." Out from such a clearing

men and women walk, opulent, unafraid, and unashamed. To be true and brave, not to say holy, takes time, and time spent in "sessions of sweet, silent thought." All the rich graces and virtues of the highway are begotten and nurtured in "flashes of silence."

Moreover, and as explaining all the rest that I've been writing, it is "silence that speaks in deafening tones of God." Of course there is God for the highway, God for the loom, the forge, the forum. But he is to be identified in the open as the very same we found in the cloister of the spirit. "Be *still* and know that I am God," is the admonition for every age. In a valid sense God *was* in the whirlwind, earthquake, fire, but Elijah did not know. Not until nature's loud voices had hushed him was Elijah quiet enough to listen. Then, in the aftermath of calm, a "still small voice" waked all the echoes in the prophet's soul. "Hast heard God speak lately?" queried a Quaker of his companion. Then, to the other's lowered glance, the questioner added, "Thou must have forgotten how to be quiet." To induce the calm into which God can speak is the highest service of prayer. To prepare an oratory for the Voice that calls down through all aisles and ages is the rich mission of Lent. To help gain audience for Him who speaks most con-

vincingly through "flashes of silence," are the successive chapters of this little volume prepared, if perchance some confused pilgrim, "falling with a weight of cares," may find himself

> "Upon the great world's altar-stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God."

II

AT THE FLOOD

Mostly I am committed to economy. Born on that soil from which the Pilgrims pinched a scanty living; descended, through no fault—or merit—of mine, from frugal folk who felt compelled to husband all resources; taught, as a lad, to watch the pennies, to preserve stray lengths of cord, and to clean my plate at table, I could hardly stultify my ancestry. Instinctively I hate waste, whether of food or money, strength or feeling. Inevitably, therefore (though I do not parade it as a paramount virtue), the extragavance of our age offends me. I find myself in hot protest against it. I wonder, moreover, to what abysses it may lead. Luxurious days are dangerous days. Human nature, either in the mass or in the individual, can endure a huge amount of hardship, and be profited thereby, but it grows flabby in the soft airs of affluence. Softness seems to have smitten us as a blight. I observe multitudes riding who would be advantaged physically by walking; spending money like drunken sailors; bartering birthrights for messes of

pottage. The way in most request nowadays is the easiest way. And a protest burns in my heart, even when I succeed in choking back the expression of it.

But there is one form of extravagance I never feel called upon to rebuke. It is the prodigality of the heart, the floodtide of love in its most beautiful forms. And I always turn to the Bible for warrant. From cover to cover the Bible is a *Book of Extravagance*—extravagant love, extravagant kindness, extravagant sacrifice, extravagant redemption. It opens wide the sluices of the soul—toward others. It puts divine premium upon largess of spirit. It shows God in his plenteousness—sunshine, rain, harvest, mercy, forgiveness. It rebukes every form of niggardliness. If it admonishes to "gather up the fragments," it does so for the sake of greater store to bless with. The entire ministry of our Lord is a crowning, lustrous instance of prodigality. He saved not himself while there were others to be saved. And, one immortal day, he let himself go utterly, that, by the emptying of his own veins, he might win a world to his Father. He is the supreme proponent of extravagance—the lavishness of love.

But I am thinking, particularly, of one incident in which he defended this sort of spirit.

A woman had just broken above his head her alabaster box of spikenard. The room was redolent of a fragrance that has drifted across continents and ages. We could smell it still if our nostrils were as keen as are our ears. The other evening I sat listening to music in Schenectady, Pittsburgh, and Des Moines—melody relayed across hill and vale by the marvel of a simple device. Doubtless we shall yet "listen in" to shouts and prayers on the other side of the world. I hope my radio fans will pardon me if I say that the *wonder* of it, rather than the *sound* of voice or instrument, always fascinates me. There are no such conveyancers of odors. But if there were, and our sense of smell were acute enough, we might catch the perfume of a woman's gift nineteen centuries ago.

And the critics were there too, as always, with their confoundedly commercial tables of values. Like anybody else who has learned but half a lesson, they were distressingly ready to show off their knowledge. "Three hundred pence," they said, as if they were heaven-sent appraisers of an offering that never can be priced. For that matter, I dislike to hear anybody attempt to put a price on a gift. In so far as it is a veritable gift, you *cannot* put a price on it. You may tell how many dollars

it cost in a store, or how many hours it took in the making. But when you have gone that far you have not arrived anywhere at all as to the determination, either of cost or value. Under the appraisement which the heart renders, a stray bit of bunting may be more precious than any silken banner ever flung to the wind; and "a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple," will be more worthful than a bushel of Liberty Bonds. A real gift is heart-commerce, and permits no other appraisal.

When the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, in New York City, was begun, many a prudent voice was lifted in protest against putting into that majestic pile—the most costly shrine in this country—so many millions of dollars. Think what a multitude of hungry mouths those dollars would have filled! What a throng of half-clad children might have been clothed! Instead of standing precise, if splendid, on Morningside Heights, let the money represented in arch and glass and altar go about the streets, like the Master, doing good. But such is the criticism of men who have learned but half their Lord's lesson. Of course "it might have been sold for millions of times three hundred pence and the money given to the poor." And in so far as that great house

of worship stands for the extravagance of pride or denominational rivalry or religious caste, it ought to be thus disposed of. But if it exemplifies the extravagance of love, "let it alone," as Jesus warned the ready appraisers of the spikenard. Love, in any of its highest expressions, is the one outgo that cannot be priced—*must* not be priced. And the devotee who breaks his full alabaster box in an outrush of gratitude and affection will normally travel most miles to bless others. The heart has its rights, as truly as the head has. And the heart which does not long to pour spikenard as if it were water over the head of its Lord has somehow missed *him*. Love at its flood is essentially extravagant—to the infinite scandal of the economist. It will not always listen to warnings in the name of a "cautious, statistical Christ." Now and again, for a shining, imperial moment, it seems to forget beggars, the unemployed and forlorn, while it lets go in a prodigal gift.

"Three hundred pence"—such was the *price* named. But the *value*—alas, the critics had not guessed that! Else would they have bitten their tongues off before they criticized the most beautiful piece of devotion they had yet seen. Even political economists recognize vast differences between price and value. And

one need not open a book to discover that he may know the *price* of *everything*, without understanding the *value* of *anything*. Here is a volume marked, in plain figures, "Two dollars." That is the sum you will pay for it at a stall. But what has that to do with its worth? Its real value may be thirty cents or a thousand dollars, according to the giver of it, and the message you find in it. When you really value a book you never look for the price-mark. 'Tis the heart imparts value to the gift. On your library table, or tucked away in a drawer, is a shabby volume, perhaps, for which the dealer would not allow ten cents, yet which the wealth of Golconda could not buy. I have a friend who is a wizard at naming the selling prices of paintings. An art dealer once urged me to purchase a certain color-print, on the ground that it would double in "value" within two years. But what does a salesman know of *values?* Value is fixed by the life an artist expends on his canvas, or the satisfaction the owner takes from it for his own soul.

On a certain melancholy hill, just outside a city wall, a Man was crucified for the sake of a world of men. And, pondering that supernal sacrifice, some of the old theologians put a disastrously commercial mark upon it. So

much suffering—so much forgiveness, they said. To their credit, be it added, they went far enough to maintain that a single drop of Jesus' blood would have sufficed to redeem a race from the penalty of its sin. But to put a price on Calvary! That cross was the breaking of the alabaster box of the heart of God. No wonder that Jesus defended Mary. Always love must be permitted its great moments of extravagance; or else it is not love but something less. Just as soon as love begins to be calculating it falls from its high estate. Motherhood, at its best, is always spendthrift. Human service is a perilously lavish ministry. Redemption is the costliest thing on earth or in heaven. And love, like wisdom, is "justified of her children" only.

III

THE STEP DOWN

A FRIEND complained to me recently that a certain new hospital door opens unexpectedly upon a floor level a few inches down. He felt that the situation ought to be corrected at once, lest somebody else be subjected to the jolt he had just received. For *himself* he did not mind, of course. He was strong and young, and a fall would not hurt him, he said. He was thinking of others less alert than himself. He had our confoundedly exasperating way of becoming solicitous, suddenly, for the rest of humanity when one's own safety or dignity is threatened. Everybody knows the disconcerting experience of thus stepping down. For the instant we seem to have been launched into space. Dignity goes to the winds. We plunge, rear, fling our arms, exclaim things not intended for print, and are fortunate, withal, to escape physical damage.

I may remedy the particular defect called to my attention by my friend. But life itself has a most disconcerting fashion of dropping suddenly from the dramatic to the common-

place, from the sublime to the apparently ridiculous. For the moment I do not ask the philosophy of the sequence, if philosophy there be. I do not even question the sanity or decency of it. I merely admit it—and smile if possible. Anywhere you look you may see it happening. The orator pauses in his flight to mop his brow or adjust his collar. The fireman, after risking his life to save another, slips off his rubber coat and goes back to his porridge and pipe. The winner of presidential honors turns away, with leaping heart, to caress his dog or spank his child. Peter came down from his housetop-vision to answer a knock at his door. Even if "the path of glory leads" not immediately "to the grave," it is prone to narrow toward very prosaic duty.

Thus returned the heroes of Belleau Wood and Messines Ridge to forge and desk and factory. Oh, I think that was what ailed a multitude of our boys from "over there." They had lived at high tension for a few hurrying weeks or months. Despite hardship and privation and wounds—or partly as the consequence of such grueling experience—they had touched life's upper ranges. They had served as those "of whom the world is not worthy." Then, with flags furled and trumpets mute, they were expected to resume the dull prose

of ordinary days. That they did not succeed quite magnificently in meeting the test is merely another instance of the difficulty of coming gracefully down from the mount to the plain.

Such a moment, I am sure, was Peter's on the night of his escape from prison. While a strange unearthly light was shining about him, and a celestial deliverer was striking off his chains—all startling and unprecedented—came this command: "Bind on thy sandals." Under ordinary circumstances Peter would have expected to lace his own shoes. But these were far from ordinary circumstances. Imagine being freshly snatched from some imminent peril, or set for a shining honor, or called to the richness of a surpassing love—and then being admonished not to forget your toothbrush. I should have enjoyed a glimpse of Peter's face in that moment. Peter was just the sort of man to resent the intrusion of the commonplace upon a great occasion. Wasn't it he that asked to build tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration—"one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias"? Why not let the delivering angel fasten Peter's sandals for him? Why not indeed? Such would be the normal human reaction. Nevertheless, Peter obeyed the command. I wonder if he lived long enough to realize the deep sanity of it.

For instance: God never intends the special angel to do for us things we are abundantly able to do for ourselves. To have the angel bind on Peter's sandals might have been a delight to remember. Nor would such service be beneath angelic dignity. Indeed, the Lord of this angel and of Peter himself had once washed Peter's feet. But here the case was altered: hence the celestial ministrant said, "Bind on thy sandals." Ours were a mischievous world if any other order prevailed. We cannot afford to have everything done for us—even by God. An authority on bees tells of a moth which worked its way into a hive, and, leaving the honey untouched, ate away the wax sealing the young bees into their cells. In consequence the young bees had an easy time coming out. Alas! For, missing the friction necessary to free their wings from the enveloping membrane, the bees emerged wingless, and were stung to death by their companions.

So with hosts of easements we cannot afford to accept. And the angel who ties our shoe or discharges our duty for us by so much cheats us of our full freedom. So the "Iron Woman" realized too late with respect to the son she had spoiled. The wisest teacher helps his pupil at critical points only. The skillful

physician encourages the convalescent to use his own strength. True philanthropy works toward self-help in its objects. This is the intent of student government in school and college. It is of the genius of Christianity. "Fill the water pots," said Jesus at Cana. "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," to the blind man just restored. "Take up thy bed and walk," to the former cripple. And to the by-standers at Lazarus' tomb, "Loose him and let him go." God's plan for getting the best out of us is written in every harvest field, in every home, in every heart. "I count life just the stuff to try the soul's strength on," sang Browning. Or, as in Peter's case: "Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals."

Then this: that as "The tumult and the shouting dies" over some transcendent experience, we shall find ourselves fronting an old task probably. After the angel opens the door and snaps off the fetters, there are shoes to be tied and homely journeys to be taken. I recall sitting in a sort of third heaven while the baseball team of my Alma Mater fought furiously with the Crimson. It seemed so far from problems of trigonometry, from Greek roots and chapel exercises to the field that radiant June day. For three hours I seemed transported to another world. Nor would I

give much for a man who cannot forget himself and his cares under such conditions. But to find the same tasks at our elbows afterward, and not be surprised or sour; to carry back to desk and forum a thrill of the transient exhilaration —this is one test of a man. So far from shop or books to the bleachers—and so short a trip back!

Just here is the problem of every new domestic altar. Not even the most rapturous lovers can live indefinitely upon the heights or in the stardust of dreams. Back from the exultation and ecstasy of human love leads the path to human usefulness. To grow used to doing *together* all sorts of prosy things; to look without flinching into the eyes of commonplace duty; to believe in the good angel of love even when it busies itself with the humblest cares, is one test and pledge of the long road of domestic felicity. Even the door of great sorrow opens back into shop or kitchen. Not for long should we indulge in the paradoxical luxury of grief. Rough though the voice that breaks upon our silence, it is usually the voice of the good God calling to unselfish partnership in the ongoing of the world. "Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals." I had a friend who so sedulously guarded his religious hours that he upset the entire household. He could not

see another human need or hear the plain voice of ordinary domestic duty while he was keeping his self-appointed tryst with God. Yet his *Master* could be interrupted anywhere, any time, to minister to a soul or body diseased. Jesus knew how to wait before his Father without neglecting any part of duty to his Father's other children.

One lesson more from Peter's disconcerting experience: The reality of deliverance would become more manifest while Peter was tying his shoe. Nothing else so helpfully recalls one to his full senses as to tackle some familiar old task or to face an inveterate trial. Had Peter been permitted to float out of prison on wind-wings, he might never have known whether he had been awake or asleep when the angel came. So our best moments verify themselves to us by the difference they make in our ordinary vocations. That love which makes work seem light is a real love. That deliverance which proves itself to be such in the presence of an old temptation is a real deliverance. When our intimates discover that we can lace a shoe and transact ordinary business and bear hurts, without whining, they will be more certain that we have been visited by God's delivering angel.

IV

ADEQUATE ALTARS

Sacrifice and shrine must be reciprocally worthy of each other. An inferior offering leaves the votary ashamed, as he is often admonished. But an altar that is unworthy of the gift laid thereon is an equal discredit to the worshiper. From the old Breton city, Saint Malo, I brought away various souvenirs, memories of ill health, and, particularly, a vista of multitudinous shrines. Shrines everywhere—over the ancient gate, near the market place, by the courthouse, on the way to theater and wineshop, at almost every turn of the narrow, winding streets—shrines everywhere! Yet the citizens seemed so unaware. Even those who paused to genuflect or repeat a "Hail Mary" carried away no look of joy that I could discern. Too many altars indeed! Too many intermediaries between the worshiper and his God—saints and martyrs obscuring the face of the Father! A wasting of the soul in facile adoration! Alas, that the soul may kneel at too many shrines, may be cheaply and superficially religious! Just as

a student thins his mentality by desultory reading; as a jack-at-all-trades becomes master of none; as a lover deflowers his own heart by loving wantonly, so a worshiper may prematurely present his gift and burn his incense.

Self-reservation is part of the profoundest self-preservation. None can fritter himself away at all sorts of wayside altars and still present an adequate offering when he comes to the supreme hour of devotion. Of Philip of Spain it was said that he lent himself, with equal ardor, both to the trifling and to the great concerns of life. "Oh, that I knew how to omit," confessed the singularly versatile Stevenson concerning his work. Any altar will not suffice. Only the loftiest shrine is entitled to the supreme gift—whether of strength, skill, industry, or affection. Only he that holds back his best for employ in life's great moments comes down to evening unashamed before God. "Take heed," counseled Moses to his countrymen as they neared Canaan, "that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest." When I asked a woman the nature of her son's calling she replied: "Oh, he hasn't any particular trade. He does a little carpentering and painting, sometimes a bit of masonry. Just now he is working in a machine shop. He is wonderfully handy, is my son. He can

do almost anything." Exactly. But the world is not profoundly interested in men who can "do almost anything." Michelangelos and Roosevelts are few. The world wants folks who can do *one* thing better than anything else. Speaking of "scatter-brains," a member of that fraternity called to ask if he might clean my writing-machine. Being assured that the writing-machine was apparently in good order, he offered to repair a clock or rebottom chairs or do any other sort of work. I was half surprised that he did not offer to dictate a few letters or write an essay for me. And so I realized why he was begging a job from door to door. He had bowed at too many altars: he had scattered his obvious talent. On the steamer with me one summer, returning from Europe, was a famous footlight favorite. She had real gifts. But when the usual "ship concert" was being arranged she declined to assist. "I am under contract," she said, "not to appear in public except under the manager who controls my professional time." She had mortgaged her gift in return for certain commercial returns, and she felt in honor bound to hold that gift in reserve. And what was true in her case in a commercial sense is true in the highest sense of every great gift of God to us. We are under contract with him not to

waste his investment, not to scatter ourselves at inadequate shrines.

But the same cautionary signal is set against misuse of the play-spirit in us. "Aren't you ashamed to sing so well?" asked the great Philip of his son. Being assured that Ismenias performed brilliantly upon the flute, Antisthenes, the cynic, replied: "Then he is good for nothing else." Herbert Spencer, who prided himself upon his skill as a billiard player, was one day beaten at his favorite game. And his comment must have soured in the mouth the victor's taste of triumph. "Sir, to play a *good* game of billiards is the mark of a gentleman; but to play *too good* a game is evidence of a misspent youth." "Well done but not worth doing," snapped a critic upon being shown a delicate bit of carving upon a peach-pit. The question always remains, not how well you do *what* you do, but how much bigger and more important thing you might have achieved. With all my heart I believe in play. One must unbend his bow occasionally if it shall throw the arrow well. But to leave a bow unstrung, or to string it to amusement only, is tragedy. To make any diversion, however innocent, the main business of one's day is treachery to self and God. "Not failure but low aim is crime," cries Browning.

Moreover, from harmless divertisement to pernicious self-indulgence is but a single step. They say that one explanation of steadily rising prices must be sought in the reluctance of our young men to be farmers. Clerks, salesmen, office slaves—anything but farmers. But there is one form of agriculture to which few young folk seem averse. I mean the sowing of wild oats. Alas that so many excusing voices may be heard for that sort of husbandry! As if the normal way to cleanse manhood were by a bath in the turgid waters of sin, and a preparation for later continence were to be found in early incontinence! Fortunately, nowadays, the real argument runs otherwise. Wanting good soldiers for the great war, Lord Kitchener declared bitterly against the wine-glass and the scarlet woman. But if wild oats are bad sowing for a battlefield, the harvest is no kinder on any other field. Reaping from that sort of planting is dreadful anywhere.

Shall I write of love? Why not? Novelists ring the changes on it. Dramatists and the silver screen exploit it for revenue only. Painters limn it on canvas and poets sing it in various keys. Shall the prophet have nothing to say? Upon the way men and women make this burning offering of the heart depends, in large measure, the destiny of the race. In

love, more than anywhere else, wayside altars are a profanation—a sin against the holy spirit of manhood and womanhood. Here is the difference between the loves of two famous Roberts—Burns and Browning. Poor, lovable, impetuous Robert of Ayrshire had been heedless devotee at wayside altars. He had given the leash to any importunate passion that swept him. You cannot imagine him as exalted by such a love as glorified Browning when he offered to Elizabeth Barrett the unspent, unsoiled love of a whole manhood. Browning's was a sacramental love. All the earlier years he had been holding himself for a supreme gift. He gave his woman as much as he asked of her. As much as he asked of her! That might be so much—nowadays. I know not where to place the blame, but there has been a lowering of feminine standards. Not to speak of the deeper tragedies, I heard it *boasted*, concerning a prominent young woman, that she had been engaged a half dozen times. Boasted, I say. Rather should the fact have been confessed with sorrow. Love's great hour never can strike for her. She has scattered her heart-offering. "Reserve thyself, lest, when thou come to the true temple of love, thou hast no offering to bestow."

Finally, think of the sin of sacrificing at any ordinary shrine the homage that belongs to God alone. This is the peril of business, of scholarship, of art; that these vocations may receive God's first portion. I hear men say that they have no need to be religious. Rather, insist that lungs need no air. Say that an axle needs no oil. By splendid contrast I recall Him who "for the joy that was set before him" held himself unfrittered, unspent, except in ministry. "Mine hour is not yet come," he answered when friends importuned him to let the clock strike prematurely. He held himself for a supreme gift to mankind, and so is the challenge of all.

V

FAILING SPRINGS

I HAVE heard of streams that never run dry. Likely I have met them, though I never had opportunity to prove to the full their owners' testimony. No trouble at all to buy such a limpid benison, providing you are willing to take the real-estate dealer's word for it. One of my friends claims that the well on his premises has not failed, even in the droughtiest season, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. And he looks as smug about it as if he had personally started the thing, or received it from God as reward for specific merit. He tells how neighbors, near and far, bring their buckets and barrels to his wonderful well—while he looks on, magnanimous, superior, condescending, as a sort of indulgent deity. But just now I have in mind another variety of stream (the kind that runs dry) and one of them in particular. The historic name of this failing spring is Cherith. Once it had flowed cool and sweet for a weary prophet. In his strife-harried ears it sang its cheery melody—somewhere in Canaan, long ago.

Geographically, I cannot locate it for you. From the maps of the East its very name has perished, as if, when the crucial time came, this musical stream ran so dismally dry as to leave no trace. All the better, perhaps, for my present purpose. Despite its geographic vagueness, most of us can locate Cherith. Like Elijah, we have been there; are there to-day. If not in the atlas, then, at least, in our lives we can locate the spot where a precious brook failed.

The stream of business success, perhaps. Commercial records indicate that ninety-five per cent of all merchants fail, soon or late. Which is merely an arithmetical way of saying that ninety-five out of each hundred business men must hang dry-lipped and fevered of spirit over the failing brook of their enterprises. Oh, the blighted plans and the parched souls when income fails! Some day, the physician watches his practice diminish, and the lawyer sees former clients turn in at another door than his, and the clergyman discovers that, while a hoary head may be a crown of glory, it is the poorest sort of credential with a pulpit supply committee. Or health, that stream whose continuity of flow most people take for granted. Barring the few who always accept their own health "on suspicion," and who have them-

selves examined, medically, about once a quarter, the rest of us expect to go on keeping well. Yet, some bleak day, rhythm fails in the pulse and the stream of vitality runs low. Even the business of growing old is solemn. Years ago a British essayist wrote mournfully about "The Tragedy of the First Gray Hair." To realize that we cannot run upstairs as formerly; that work tires us unaccountably; that cares and problems that once piqued and challenged, now tend to sour us—this is the experience of every one permitted to grow old. Or friendship. One may get on despite a meager salary and loss of health, but without friends one cannot live at all. In the dirgelike words of Joseph Roux: "We call an orphan that man who has lost his parents; and a widower, that man who has lost his wife; but that man who has had the immense unhappiness of losing his friend—by what name do we call him? Here language holds its peace in impotence." Some day a lad, like the boy in "The Doctor's Christmas Story," happens upon the skeleton in the family closet. Some day a man or woman loses the joy of love and home. Some day the veriest saint admits that he is not perfectly "sure of God." 'Tis the failing of the brook upon which we counted most in time of need. Pray God that you be not left

too long alone at Cherith when Cherith runs dry! Not even Elijah could afford to tarry many days after the brook failed.

What, then, since we cannot prevent the drying of the spring? First this: remember that loss itself is a confession of former possession. One cannot lose unless, first, he has possessed. Many a joy is best measured by its shadow. The profounder our grief, the deeper the warrant for thankfulness for former blessing. No untasting lips can know the sweetness of the waters of Cherith. We cannot live indefinitely upon past experience any more than we can upon dinners eaten and dollars spent. Yet we ought to be nourished, longer than we sometimes incline to permit, on the sweet bread of a lovely past. It is a thousand times better to have loved and lost than never to have known the ecstasy of loving. It is glorious to have been able *once* to make a great gift. "I know what true happiness is," cried Stevenson as his hands fell wearily, "for I have done good work." Asked to name the secret of his singularly opulent life, Charles Kingsley said, "I had a friend." The phrase itself is doubtless a pathetic admission; it is also a beautiful boast. Whereas many folks, under such dispensation of sorrow, would never cease telling how much they had *lost*,

Kingsley emphasized proudly the friend he once had.

Tradition says that Phillips Brooks lived out his splendid life in utter fealty to the girl he had loved and lost. No bitterness, no pining, no heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. He gave himself to a greater ministry, consecrated his sorrow as a means of carrying consolation to others. He lived and died, not in the spirit of *deprivation*, but of perfect *possession*. Having once possessed, he seemed enriched for all the journey ahead. His Cherith had failed, yet he succeeded in reminding the world of the peerless joy once his. Meredith says, "To seem injured is always a luxury, whether among boys or men." It is a luxury, however, that few of us can afford to indulge. What transfigurations might be ours if we spent less strength scolding the fates that robbed us and more time thanking God that we once *had* so much to lose! Even loneliness could not sour us, in such spirit, when the brook fails.

Notice also that the drying of Cherith in this ancient instance was not the end of the story. Possibly Elijah fancied that it was. He seems to have doubted a God who could let the brook run dry. In England there used to be a saying that "an atheist is a man who cannot get all the beer and skittles he wants."

There are many such. Adversity shakes the best of us. A friend of mine told how ten thousand dollars at a critical juncture saved him from bankruptcy. Though the money came by accident, so to say, and by a human hand, my friend gave great credit to God. Of course. But would insolvency have argued against the goodness which, as Stevenson wrote, is "at the heart of things"?

> "It is easy enough to be pleasant
> When life flows along like a song;
> But the man worth while is the man who can smile,"

and believe in goodness, and call God just, and trust the final event,

> "When everything goes dead wrong."

Perhaps the failing of the brook was part of the process of building a man. It often is.

And after Cherith came Zarephath, with its unwasting oil and meal, its gracious fellowship, its signal honor to the prophet's office. If only Elijah could have known! How the knowledge would have lifted the load from his faith! Exactly. It would have obviated all rack and test of manhood, and by so much would have sent Elijah to Zarephath less competent, less prepared. Somehow the failing of the brook was more than merely *antecedent;*

it was *preparatory*. Of Sir Joshua Reynolds it is said that a brush flung at his fresco, in Saint Paul's, London, smudging his handiwork, saved the painter's life. Thus God not infrequently saves a man by interfering with his complacent plans; brings him to Zarephath at length *by way of* the brook that failed.

VI

ANONYMOUS CREDITORS

In one of his tenderest paragraphs Henry Ward Beecher pays exquisite tribute to the frail woman who taught his district school among the Connecticut hills. "She was so thin that the light seemed to shine through her. I cannot recall that she ever opened a book to me. Yet I feel in my soul that the best of my sermons of these later years were inspired in me by her who taught in that school but a single winter." Alas that the unostentatious fashioner of so great a prophet could not live to thrill under such recognition! Not often, however, should we know *where* to lay the garland if we had *grace* to do it. I could name the college professor I enjoyed most, the one I liked least, even the one whom I considered the most proficient instructor. Yet I question if I could designate the teacher who most deeply blessed me. The silent, puissant forces that fuse in the shaping of a life are like the inbreathed oxygen and ingested food of yesterday. Unaware of our debt, we live on them and by them. But who can tally the

full list of his creditors—mother and playmate, teacher and friend, books, hills, sunsets and sorrow? And shall anyone dare to close the category until he has named God?

Many of life's choicest gifts are anonymous, all the way from a good night's sleep to a commanding ideal or a rare fellowship. Too often it suffices that we accept heartening and enrichment, nor pause to ask the name of our benefactor. Whereas, I do not think that the heart gets its due until it has found specific place to pour its gratitude. Thanks need direction as well as diffusion. And, for the reverent spirit, most of the lines lead at last to the author of "every good and perfect gift."

Ordinarily, you can take the soul-gauge of a child by the toys that engross him. There is a toy-soldier period, a marble-and-top age, and a stage at which he teases the cat. By the playthings he outgrows, as by the new ideals he somewhat clumsily adopts, you can measure his growth toward maturity. Alas that so many never pass beyond a fifteen-year-old development! Thus you may guess the real magnitude of a man by the opulence of the deity he worships. A puny soul cannot be host to a great God. Parochial and capricious God, or Lord of all days and realms and dreams, which? Let a man confess to me how he wor-

ships and I shall tell him what he is. A heaven so circumscribed it cannot include "outside saints," as Bushnell called them, would not be heaven at all. Whoso, anywhere, worketh righteousness and loveth mercy and keepeth a clean heart, is as truly a divine witness as any accredited saint on the church calendar. I am thinking of a God who is big enough to be Father of all the children of men. And I may suggest a few of the ways in which he enriches and molds us.

By heredity, for example. As someone says, a man is not merely a chip off the old block; he is a chip from many blocks. We have picked ourselves up, under God, along a timeless path. The sudden sweating of a human hand, in the instant of falling, harks back to a day when an effusion of moisture, in the palm of an arboreal ancestor, saved him from breaking his neck. The rising of one's hair (or the feeling that it rises) in a moment of fright or anger, is not strange at all when we observe the same phenomenon on the back of a dog or the head of a bird. Many shapes are up the family tree—more than we should enjoy admitting to our decorous parlors. How many generations were needed to produce a Cromwell or Cavour, a Wilberforce or Wesley, a Lafayette or Lincoln?

If God is ever tempted to laugh, as the psalmist intimates, it must be when he meets one of our strutting, swollen-chested self-made men. "Self-made?" observed a wit in the presence of such a specimen of arrogance; "well, that relieves God of a great responsibility." The utmost that any industrious spirit can do is to make the most of materials provided by God through patient ages of preparation. I am not certain that Ysaye ever recognized his full debt to God; or Melba, in whose tones the whisper of evening breezes and the call of the mating birds were blended; or Corot, with his zephyr-like brush leaping to canvas; or Burbank, challenging the desert to break forth and blossom as the rose; or Edison in his laboratory. I cannot affirm that they *admitted* their obligation, but I know it was real and binding. None can do more than show forth a part of the divine investment. Especially when we realize that the crowning achievement of God is not a pliant finger or a resourceful brain, but the gianthood of a great heart. The greatest asset of Jenny Lind was not her glorious voice, but her queenly heart. When she sang, the children for whom she was building a home, out of her earnings, sang through her. "Oh that I may live two years longer," she said, "to complete my orphans' refuge!" The supreme

gift of Lincoln was not his fund of common sense, nor his fearless honesty, nor his political sagacity, but his almost maternal tenderness of spirit. "I am not in favor," he said, "of crushing anybody out." Nothing short of the gianthood of a great heart can compass earth's redemption. And to that end God qualifies us by our inheritance.

By our privileges too. "The world owes you a car," ran a clever "ad" in the street cars. I wonder? Personally, I do not think the world owes a man anything except the air he breathes and the food he can gather and six feet of inexpensive earth for burial. Not even the last named, perhaps, if the advocates of cremation are correct in their thesis. We have misnamed most of our rights. They are privileges instead of rights. They represent the forethought and magnanimity of God through his thrifty children. They are the means by which he equips us for happiness and service. The difference in our favor, as against Robinson Crusoe, who must hunt before he could eat, and build a house before he could sleep under a roof, is privilege. Thanks to a long line of inventive forbears who were able to take hints from God, life has been made easy for us in a thousand particulars. And if circumstances may be accorded

no part in the making of a man, God has wasted an incredible amount of time and skill in fitting up this world for our tenancy.

Often I pass a school just as the children emerge when lessons are done for the day. And I watch the torrent of young life flood out through the gates, spreading down the street, widening and thinning, like a stream across the meadows, till the last child has disappeared from sight. Wonderful days! Yet I doubt if a half dozen of the youngsters think of school as *privilege.* Most of them probably think of it as dire necessity, to be avoided if possible. But for inquisitive parents and truant laws, the ordinary pupil would absent himself altogether. Yet school with its forms and rules, its textbooks and blackboards, means privilege. It provides training in use of some of the tools with which the house of life is built. Artemus Ward once observed that no man ever uses his thumbnail for a screwdriver but once. Yet unless such tools could be bought, most of us would be compelled to use our thumbnails for screwdrivers often. School, college, the social order, the church itself, offers a screwdriver in place of the thumbnail. By all the multiform privileges that modern life provides God qualifies us for maximum use in a restless world moving toward the light.

And, then, at the crest, by the immediate gift of himself. Lyman Abbott once said: "If I could cause to pass before you, in panoramic vividness, the scenes of your childhood, I would bring, last of all, the evening hour when your mother took you up into her arms . . . and you were learning more than you ever learned at any other time." Then it was that your mother gave you *herself*. Not bread, not mending, not even prayers, but *herself*. God is like that. At the highest he enriches, not by commandments and by the plenty of a promised land, but as mothers do, by the grace of a presence. For that Jesus stands pre-eminently. He means more than bread—though he broke the loaves to the hungry. He means more than healing—though he was lavish of that. He is a Presence, intimate, tender, inclusive, abiding. But to *take* that and not to *realize* that you have it! To miss the poignant surprise of knowing *who* it is that stands with you through all! I do not think anybody can afford to do that. 'Tis like a kiss received in sleep. One should be awake to feel the wonder of it.

VII

LAND AHEAD

Thus, from crow's nest or lookout, have I heard the call—sometimes at midnight, sometimes at noon. And, usually, I was compelled to take the sailors' word for it. For me, as for Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," there was only water everywhere. The exact process by which a skilled seaman reaches his conclusion he probably could not tell. Change of atmospheric tone, behavior of birds, color of sea, drift of weed, together with what more of rather obvious signals, do not equal the definite impression in the consciousness of the mariner. Beyond all these lies a region of almost intuitional knowledge, from which break, for the initiate, unaccountable warnings and intimations. He *knows*, but cannot *tell*.

Thus, each calling tends to evoke its special keenness of apprehension. The experienced trapper or fisherman is almost uncannily sensitive to signs which escape the rest of us. The trained bank teller suddenly flings aside a suspected bill. The engineer, despite the almost deafening rush of his machine, detects

an ominous sound. The skillful physician leaps to a subtle change in his patient, and the mother rouses at the irregular breathing of her child. Similarly, by a delicately trained sense of whose rationale he probably could give no account, the proficient mariner *feels* the proximity of land that he cannot yet see.

So it was in a certain classic instance and near the end of a famous voyage. Not so famous, in a way, as Ulysses' or Columbus,' yet eminent enough to have passed into common speech—Paul's voyage toward Rome. From the moment of lifting anchor, matters had gone wrong. Several times had the skipper been obliged to alter his course. At length a tempest broke whose fury drove the vessel up and down the Adriatic for fourteen days and nights. Part of the cargo had gone overboard. Then, through the inky darkness of the fourteenth night, flashed those mysterious signals which only the trained mariner can read. What the signals were I do not know. Enough that the record declares: "About midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near some country." Nor am I concerned just now with the particular coast thus discerned. It might have been Mitylene, Troas, Lemnos, or Sicily where the ship's company went ashore, "some on boards, some on planks,

and some on broken pieces of the ship." With the nature of the beach on which the vessel tore herself I do not now interest myself; nor with the manner of welcome accorded by the natives; nor with the fact that every soul on the ship "came safe to land." Here is the item I am after; that, "about midnight," when strength was spent, and hope was as unstarred as the black heavens, "the shipmen deemed that they drew near some country."

Here are beautiful implications for us whose voyage of faith seems desolatingly long and stormy, and who wonder wearily what shore, if any, bounds the lashing element on which we fare. "About midnight," reads the log in this ancient instance. Time of utter darkness and peril—"about midnight." Isn't it upon such an hour that we seem to have fallen? The air is rife with jeremiads. Anywhere one reads or listens he catches the acrid, bitter note of disillusion and gloom. Unsettlement, unease, mixes with the oxygen we breathe. Things called fundamental by our sires, sanctions once considered eternal in their force, are sadly or impudently thrown open to review. In church, in social order, in business, in the family, in the relation of the soul to its God, is the seethe of uncertainty. Bolshevism in Russia is but an aggravated type of a spirit of

revolt that is wider than civilization. East is west, black is white, right is wrong—after the casuists have completed their argument. Bold must he be who dares predict the exact salvage of time-honored codes and sanctities. If this is not the zero hour of most that we hold venerable in life, some would like to know how much blacker and chillier the real zero hour *can* be. "Poor fellow, your part is played out," said Carlyle, in one of his dark moods, looking up at a wayside crucifix. But the hour is later and the night more threatful now.

The above paragraph, however, is not intended as a wail. For I recall with access of joy that in the ancient instance, "about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near some country." Strange country, mayhap, but still solid earth. An old salt used to tell me that he could fairly smell land at fifty miles remove. Pity if intimations of continents of new-won righteousness and reconsecrated truth cannot be had through the mists and murk of the present midnight hour! Just as this mood was yeasting in me I opened a well-known magazine of serious, sometimes solemn vein. Its first article, by an eminent novelist, harbingers a turning from the filth and foulness of current realism to a sweetening romanticism in fiction. The second article

discovers, among the youth of an ancient and supposedly decadent race, a glad, sure leap toward the old sanctions and sanctities of human life. The third finds in scholastic seats, whence faith has so often been outcast, new pledges for democracy. The sixth is a plea for mystery as against mechanics, for child-religion in the interest of the race. As a recent brilliant scientific monograph confesses, materialism with all its wordy explanations brings us nowhere to mental standing ground; leaves us gasping and groping for foothold.

"They drew near some country," deemed these sea-wise folks of old. So, in a different and more important sense, deem the truest prophets of the soul. The exact topography of it—its hills of vision and vales of rest, its harvests of good will and its streams of love, who can precisely say? But I make sure that the country which we are approaching, in storm and spite of it, perhaps by the aid of it, is a *land of brotherliness*. Viewed in the large, earth is a more fraternal place of habitat to-day than in any golden age of the past. The truly constructive forces of human society are as quiet as sun and shower. They that are doing the actual work of kingdom-building have least time or inclination to advertise it.

More folks are asking, each day, what it means to be a brother of man. The apparent failures at Lausanne register, nevertheless, a movement toward fraternity. National cupidity may rage and diplomats imagine a vain thing, yet out of the turmoil and welter shall the world emerge to a juster peace. The clock of human progress strikes a new hour when a huge corporation concedes the doom of the twelve-hour day. Various conciliation boards are furtively pointing the way to industrial understanding. "As iron sharpeneth iron," so may the conflicts of warring opinion produce better swords for conversion into plowshares. Even the colossal tragedy of Russia may, by indirection, at least, teach a luminous lesson that could be had in no less painful way. Spite of every countervailing indication, mankind is making progress, blindly, perhaps, and in stress of midnight peril, toward a land of brotherhood.

And a land of truth. The process of sifting out ancient error is painful. Doubtless, some truth is being sacrificed, temporarily, in the separating. But truth is never *lost*—more than gold is. Fused, crushed, dissolved, it remains pure metal. And in the final event it can shine again, bearing the superscription of the king. Some day we shall attain to the aris-

tocracy of honesty, of which one said: "To be honest in business, to be honest in love, to be honest in religion: not to lie to a neighbor, not to lie to a woman, not to lie to God—this would be fame for the ages." Never again shall we be willing to accept so much dross with our gold: never again to uphold a doctrine because it is venerable and rich in friends; never again to compound a mental felony for the sake of a cheap tranquillity. Ours is a God of truth. Truth is the common tongue of the country to which we draw near.

And purity. Already is reaction setting in from the reign of moral anarchy. Filthy living brings inevitably soul-nausea. Humanity cannot indefinitely stuff itself with pruriency, whether on the stage, in print, or in life itself. Even those who patronize and practice lubricity are stout witnesses against it. Some day, soon, a veritable storm of protest will break against the easy codes and sensual spirit of our times. One can hear the mutterings now. We are part angel; and the angel in us will have its day. Even at our moral midnight are we drawing near a land whose airs are sweet and cool from the hills of God.

And immortality? Strange—and yet still stranger were the fact otherwise—the *hearts*

of men generally deny the infidelity of their *opinions*. We cannot quite be argued out of our persuasion that life is stronger than death. Back from the arctic circle of unbelief are we driven toward a sunnier shore. Even for an Ingersoll, at his brother's grave, "faith hears the rustle of a wing and hope sees the glimmer of a star." Spite of doubts and misgivings, against the cold winds of reasoned skepticism, we draw near the harbor of the City of sure foundations, "whose builder and maker is God."

VIII

THE VICTOR'S BADGE

Sometimes it is a medal, sometimes a strip of color, sometimes a citation, sometimes a scar or an empty sleeve. And sometimes the emblem is hidden in the soul itself. Every triumph registers *somewhere*, often with the index of pain. And the most significant token of all is most deeply worn. Especially from the greatest battles of all—battles for the soul's honor—none comes off scathless. Somewhere, away from range of every eye save God's, such a victor wears his badge. I realized this afresh, in a moment of enforced waiting on a busy street. Having nothing else to read, I fell to scanning the store signs. That is what such legends are for—to be read. And usually I honor the sign-writer's craft, bad spelling and all. Even if I do not find myself advantaged thereby, I can find passing entertainment in the ways and guiles of trade. On this occasion, however, my eye did not travel far. It was held by three familiar Hebrew consonants on a modest meat-shop window. "Kosher," we say, transliterating the word. I wondered

if the butcher within realized the antiquity of the rules of his trade—especially as he removed the thigh-muscle of a slaughtered quadruped. I do not suppose he thinks at all about the matter more than the ordinary tailor when he sews a couple of buttons on the back of a tail coat; or the hat-worker when he stitches a band around the conventional hat; or the farmer when he nails a broom to the peak of his newly raised barn. We observe, every day, a host of customs the significance of which is lost upon us. And, for that matter, it were a misfortune, I suppose, if conformity to any special sanction of society were delayed until we got the history or philosophy of the observance.

But my anonymous friend behind the counter of a modest butcher shop, cutting away a certain thigh-muscle. In a twinkling we travel back to the beginnings of recorded time; to a shrewd, shifty man who, on a certain morning, limped away from a strange all-night struggle, with a new light in his face and a new pain in his body. Here is the familiar record, "And as he passed over Penuel . . . he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank . . . unto this day." Strange, vivid memorial of one man's experience ages ago! Weird instance

of the almost indelible mark that a single human may lay upon the centuries! Startling reminder of a truth without due recognition of which we go lamer than Jacob did, that far-away morning! Everybody bears *somewhere*, in body or in soul, the cost-mark of his dearest possession, the stinging offset to his most signal triumph.

One can imagine a world in which matters were different. The world of dreams is a soft world. We rarely pay full price for our victories—in dreams. We merely take as we please—in the land of our dreams. Harvest is usually ripe; no dreary waiting, no lame backs, no untimely frosts—in the land of our dreams. Even when we fall—in our dreams—the landing is easy. They say that if one really "struck," in his dream, he would die without waking. Who knows? Nobody that lives ever "struck"—in his dream. And, according to the theory, those who strike earth in a dream-fall, are past giving information on the subject. But in the land of everyday we pay for all fine possessions. We pay hard cash or hard waiting or hard battle. The cost of living always has been high in realms of spirit. Nobody enters, unscarred, any kingdom of strength or grace. None grows up without growing pains. None becomes truly master until he has served.

Even in the sunlight of the morning after his victory, Jacob went lame. "As he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh."

One of the partners in a huge commercial enterprise used to assure me that he never allowed business to rob him of sleep or comfort. He looked absolutely sleek and unperturbed. He seemed to have learned how to succeed without sweating. Ah, but I had not yet seen the real brains of the business in the person of an older brother—a nervous wreck, sleepless for a week at a time, dogged always by the shadow of madness. Let me not say that the millions he made were worth the physical price he paid for them. All I am saying is that somebody *always* pays the price. Big business grows not, overnight, like Jonah's gourd or Jack's beanstalk. Somebody always builds it out of the fabric of himself. Somebody's name is stamped on every brick in the walls. Its mortar is mixed with somebody's blood. "Can you eat sawdust without butter?" asked an eminent merchant of a youthful candidate for commercial honors. The way of mercantile success is a costly one. Loss of health, loss of family joys, loss of friends, to say naught of the subtler losses of the soul—these lie in the path to a million.

Said a certain wealthy friend, in dreariness of spirit: "I have made my pile, but in order thereto I have forfeited almost everything that made the pile worth gathering." Like Jacob, winning, he went lame.

So with the usual honors men fight to secure. Said Maeterlinck, "The soul is very lonely." But never is it so lonely as when lifted to a place of shining honor and responsibility. The heights of power are piteously cold. One must leave so much behind when he climbs far above the crowd. Lincoln, Roosevelt, Wilson were singularly lonely men, by the measure of their ideals. Again and again, in the life of our Lord, we catch this note of isolation. I do not think he really was astounded when he found his three intimates asleep, just "a stone's throw" distant from the place of his anguish. None can take company to the scene of his bloody sweat. It costs so much to wear the honors of God. The anguished cry from the cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was but a final footing in a long column of costs of redemption. He was "marred more than any other man."

Then there is the man "of imagination all compact." As some one describes it, "imagination is love's little sister." Between Wordsworth and his *Peter Bell* is merely a difference

of imagination. Imagination sees the face of God in the humblest field flower and hears in the undertone of the sea the Infinite Voice. But the unimaginative man escapes many a pain. He misses most of the fears and forbodings of his poetic-souled brother. He never borrows trouble. If he forfeits part of the glory, he escapes also part of the gloom. I think it always harder for the imaginative to be brave. Has he a tooth to be pulled, he suffers the torment of a dozen extractions before the real ordeal. If he loves, he forever foreglimpses peril to his heart. Dreaming of heaven, he feels also the chill of the dark river lying between. Much has been said of the misfortune of a *loveless* life. But who shall describe the anguishes of a *love-full* life? Love is bitter sweet, always. The sweeter it is, the greater its chance of bitterness. The heart that greatly loves is sensitive to every change of atmosphere, like a delicate musical instrument, answering with songs and shouts, or sighs and moans, the hand that draws bow across it. You cannot be a friend unless you are willing to ache. You must not ask the fine rapture of love unless you will be brave to its pain. The great lover, like Jacob, always goes from Penuel with a wounded thigh.

And the Christian life. I am tired of hearing

Christian discipleship described as a primrose path. Unless self-control is worth the wounds a man suffers acquiring it, let him choose self-indulgence. A friend of mine used to rave about his farm for a season or two after he bought it. But by the end of the second year he began to figure the cost of his potatoes and berries. And a year later he sold the farm. He was disappointed on the returns of his investment. Thus many church folks feel about the Christian life. They failed to allow for vigil and defeat. For years I bore on my hand a scarlet scar. It partly offset the joy of one summer on Lake Michigan. That was the summer I got the scar. But the scar was also remembrancer of a wonderful summer. The summer was well worth the scar. I was almost sorry when the scar began to fade, lest I lose the sharp reminder of the summer. Oh, Jacob, Jacob, I understand!

IX

SEEING GREEN

In the opinion of Sainte-Beuve, "it fell to Rousseau to put green into our literature," and, according to not infrequent experience, it falls to a grudge, jealousy, open or secret scorn to fill life's pages with the same color—in sinister sense. Nay, so to flood our veins with green that all rose and gold, all ruddy meaning and splendor are banished from our world. Is it not occasion for a thousand pities that, with new mornings to waken and starred nights to rest us, with scent of flowers and sacredness of toil to sweeten us, with friends whose adoption has been tried to enrich us, and "God over all blessed forever," we should be thrown out of joint so easily?

For everybody, nearly, there is a fly in the amber. And usually it can be found by looking for it. Frequently it is discovered *without* even looking for it. Some folks cannot seem to see anything else. Bacon wrote of the enveloping amber as "a more than royal tomb" for the fly. But the people I have in mind are aware only of the imperfection in the amber.

The matrix is spoiled—nay life itself is blighted—for them, by the imprisoned insect. Go where they may they carry a sense of defeat, if not of personal injury. To their pin-pointed view all the world is in conspiracy to flaw their happiness. No prospect entirely pleases, no joy is unconfined, no blossom is fragrant, no friendship permanent—in short, the universe is awry while their eyes are as fast stuck to the entombed fly as the fly itself in its precious envelope.

Such a man was Haman, detested for more than twenty-four hundred years. Never have I heard a good word said for Haman. With startling unanimity of sentiment he has been consigned to perdition, and "none so poor to do him reverence." Nor am I prepared to take the case for his defense. I am merely sorry for him. Granting that he got only what he gave—and deserved his fate as matter of poetic justice—still I claim the privilege of being sorry for him, as for any malefactor who, with or without good opinion of the law, feels the halter draw. I am sorry for *any* mortal who, in the face of multitudinous blessings, at the end of what should have been a perfect day, makes the tragic confession of Haman's: "All this availeth me nothing."

To be frank, I have questioned if Mordecai

did not overdo his part. Very good people are, sometimes, intensely disagreeable in spots. Even saints can do most unsanctified things. There is no other pride to equal the pride of a despised individual or race. And it may be that this Hebrew, at the king's gate, scorning equally both smiles and strokes of his enemies, ungraciously stiffened his back and tilted his nose when Haman went by. There is a look that kills; and perhaps it was Mordecai's look that killed peace in the other's soul. Nothing else mattered as against that. Even the queen's invitation could not heal Haman's wound. For, at the end of his tally of reasons for gratitude, he wretchedly admitted: "All this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate."

As frequently happens, we have celebrated the wrong funeral in this case. Not in the cemetery but in the soul itself are all real interments. When a man gives himself up to the reception of a poisonous thought; when love and faith, truth and courage perish; when jealousy or envy or any other evil mood is born, the soul begins to die. Any man, king's favorite or scullion, who admits that a glimpse of some supercilious Mordecai at the gate spoils his day or his life for him, is already writing his own obituary. The gallows prepared for

his *bête noir* merely completed the tragedy for Haman. Life was done for him when the fly in the amber made him despise the amber of life itself.

I have a friend who, "through fear of death," by bacteria, has spent many years "subject to bondage." He is not a bacteriologist by profession, yet he is a sort of specialist on the theme. He would as readily drink a ladle of hot lead as a glass of unboiled water. Not for him the luscious bivalve that opens our feasts and our throats at the same time. Milk being a famous culture-medium, he will drink no milk while the world standeth. Lions in Africa and alligators in Florida, eruptions of Aetna and the tail of Halley's comet affright him not as do the microscopic foes in drops of water. And, as a matter of fact, we stand in jeopardy, every hour, of such pestilential incursions by infinitesimal foes. Meantime, it seems inexcusable to let such petty enemies destroy our peace of mind. A world in which everything were sterilized would, in my opinion, be a zestless place. Spite of all its hardships and perils, 'tis a very good world. And to let some petty annoyance, some microscopic woe, some Mordecai at the gate veil the sun for us is sad commentary upon our sense of proportion.

Similarly with respect to the world of folks. Whether life is worth living "depends upon the liver." That is, the worth of life is subjectively determined. It is fixed for him, largely, by the view a man takes of others. Anyone may recall the optical illusion we have played upon ourselves with a couple of white cards, one bearing a red disk at the center. Fixing our gaze for a moment on the red disk, and turning to the plain card, behold a red spot at its center also! 'Twas a harmless enough trick—with two cards; but not so harmless when played with life itself. It is possible so to fill our vision with the red aspects of greed, lust, and crime that, whichever way we look, we shall seem to find these dreadful things. To his friend, Hennessey, afflicted thus concerning the then state of the world—even before the war—Mr. Dooley expostulated: "Hinnissy, I'll tell ye what's the matter wid ye. Fer the love of Mike, put down that magazine!" Over-emphasis upon exposure of fraud and violence; and not enough time with the plain sanities and sanctities of life! For the love of man, and the honor of God—and the saving of our own souls alive—we must not leave our eyes glued to the sinister aspects of human society.

Grafters and lobbies, alas! but also Roose-velts and Pinchots, Clevelands and Coolidges.

Frivolities and sensualities in modern society, of course, but also thousands upon thousands of earnest-souled men and women bent upon saving society from its own profligacy. Neglected altars and tattered creeds—and Christ more regal and commanding than in any previous age; more institutions and movements bearing the print of the Pierced Hands than ever since men "crucified the Lord of glory." On these countervailing, these redemptive aspects must we dwell adequately. Choked with the fetid airs of the lowlands, we must seek the heights betimes. To leave too long our sword in the fire of a righteous anger is to untemper the blade. We must plunge it into the cool bath of a different mood. No more than Haman can we afford to let *any* Mordecai at the king's gate destroy, by neutralizing for us, the solid joys of life.

But I mention a still more intimate world in which the same warning holds. Is there, among your acquaintance, one individual whose name makes your gorge rise, and the sight of whose prosperity sets you raging? I do not pause to inquire how he came to be your enemy. The fault may be his or yours, or both. What interests me is that so humble a person as your enemy is able to blot out for you so vast an expanse of blue sky. If your

special Mordecai could realize the profound deference you pay him—the indigestion he has caused you and the landscapes he has spoiled—he might, indeed, expire of vanity. Pathetic commentary upon our hearts that when we fall to hating one mortal we are at odds with the world. I wonder if this is why Jesus commanded us to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors—because while a disciple is hating *anybody* he cannot enjoy the lilies of the field or the comradeships of life, or even our Lord himself?

"Papa tells God all the bad things I do," plainted a child, after morning prayers, "but he never says a word about the good that's in me." Alas that such a practice does not even stop with our prayers! Stevenson thought that the *Miserere* must have been written by an atheist. He that permits any Mordecai, by the gate, to shut all vistas of heavenliness is the most desperate of atheists. By unfairness he denies the good God.

X

NO MORE SEA

Among the geologic memories of the American Desert is that of a vast inland sea. Where alkali dust now chokes the traveler, and cactus only is brave enough to grow, waves once raced and tossed their spray, and great fish plied their noiseless trade. Indeed, science, in her unemotional fashion, predicts a day when reclamation projects will have gone out of style, for earth will be as dry as the moon to-day. No immediate occasion to worry. For many an aeon to come, there will be water enough for drinking and bathing purposes, and ships larger than we have yet seen will ferry between continents. But, some day, as the Revelator foreglimpsed in his dream, there will be "no more sea." Gates of pearl and walls of jasper, golden pavements and music everywhere, trees bearing twelve kinds of fruit, and a temple without need of light other than that of a Divine Presence—all that we love now, rarified and superabundant then—but "no more sea."

How naïvely autobiographical the phrase

is! John was not thinking ahead as a geologist might; he was dreaming forward as a Hebrew would. You cannot conceive of a Phœnician or a Hollander as envisaging a paradise without a sea; more than an Esquimau preferring strawberries to blubber-steak, or a child gleeful over a toyless heaven. But the ancient Hebrew hated the sea. He never spoke of it with love and pleasure—always with awe and dread. To him it was a symbol of uncertainty, danger, separation. So, when John dreamed of a new heaven and a new earth, he saw the sea banished. "No more sea," he said. Nor do I suppose that he realized how much he was telling. A man's daydream always gives him away. It unrolls the scroll of his life. It declares where he has lived and what he has done, his anguishes and his most eager desires. Let me into the secret of your dream of life to be, and I can tell you the life that has been. Just as the foreigner carries with him, to the end of his journey, the accent of his native land, so with the accent in our dream of the future. It is intensely autobiographic. It registers the unpublished pain of weary years. It cries with a tone none but God ever heard. It throbs with yearnings unmet. It pleads for life made complete. Thus the Revelator's vision of a

sealess land is both confession and prayer for his race.

"No more sea." Just what repellent aspects of the sea John had in mind, is not for me to say. John did not specify. *Restlessness*, perhaps. Whatever else the sea is, it never is still. Lashed, furrowed or merely heaving, it is not quiet. If the outstanding characteristic of ocean could be put into a single word, I should say *restlessness*. The only sea tolerated by John in his Apocalypse was of *glass*. The keeper of an English lighthouse notes the myriads of bird-lives beat out against the great lenses, as if in a futile effort to get somewhere else at any cost. Multitudes of people are like that nowadays. Upon the modern world there seems to have fallen a vast unease. In the expressive phrasing of a familiar couplet, "We don't know where we're going, but we're on the way." Danny was the most energetic youth in my early parish. His every motion implied importance. His stride up the village street was a study in speed. His consuming ambition seemed to be to arrive *somewhere* at the earliest possible moment. Yet I never discovered where Danny arrived, nor what he accomplished while there, nor why he hurried back just as feverishly. Ultimately it appeared that he was not headed anywhere in particular;

he was merely *going*—a sort of picturesque prototype of millions of moderns. Because we are restless we work too hard. The pace that kills is not usually required of us; we whip ourselves into it by an inward unrest. And because we are restless we play too hard—when we get at it. The world is unhappy nowadays. Said Desjardins: "Never, I suppose, were people so universally sad as at the present time." Nor need we blame the war. Sadness, vast and engulfing, brooded over the earth before Germany struck her blow. Perhaps, in a way, the prevailing sadness brought on the war. I mean that the war itself was a giant upheaval of soul *dis*-eased. A recent anthology of modern poems on death made me catch my breath. Pens do not fly to such a theme until their wielders are weary or distrustful of life.

But the sea is symbol of *futility*. It never is appreciably more—or less. Rivers run into it, yet it never overflows. Nothing seems to make lasting impression upon the sea. On a sandbar near Fire Island Light, is a small pagoda to the memory of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, who, with her baby, lost her life, just off shore, on her tragic voyage homeward. Yet the ocean smiled again next morning as if nothing had happened; just as after the Lusi-

tania went down. I have spent fascinating hours on the shore, watching the tide creep in—and slip out. The same, any day. Nothing eventful, nothing that really matters. Futility! Similarly, an increasing multitude feel toward life. You shall meet Ecclesiastes at any street corner, in any gathering. Over our table, at The Roycroft Inn, years ago, hung a brief legend burned artistically into wood. "It doesn't matter." Headache doesn't matter. Heartache doesn't matter. Rainy days do not matter. What, then, does matter? Goodness, truth, sobriety, unselfishness—do these really matter if "everything comes out even at the end of the day, and still more even when all the days are over," as Chesterfield declared? Alas, that, when we begin to tally the things that do not matter, we are prone to lengthen the list recklessly! "What's the use?" groaned my friend as he instanced his futile efforts to win his fight. "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain," cried the psalmist. If you plant a flower, mayhap it will grow. If you fling a stone, you may find it again. Whereas, the sea swallows both seed and stone, and indifferent to both. And often life seems as heartless as that. It engulfs both integrity and fault, and neither blesses you for the one nor curses you for the other.

Then the sea stands for *darkness*. Nothing else is as dreadfully black as the sea is at night. Time and again I, who love the sea, have gone inside from the deck of a vessel with a sort of smothering darkness choking me. The sea can be so inky at night. And so can life. Sometimes I fancy that the only serious malady of the world is darkness. Sometimes I think it is the only thing we ought to be afraid of. I mean the darkness of superstition, of ignorance, of greed, of jealousy, of man's inhumanity to man. John said that the gates of the city of his dream were *never shut*—because there is no night there. A nightless city could safely be gateless. It is the outside darkness that makes necessary the gates. For you never know what terrors will break in from the dark.

No more sea! No more sea! No more sea! But when our Lord gets his way on earth, John need not dream of the sea as banished. Christ cures the distempers of which the sea is symbol. One day he entered Peter's home which was fetid with fever-breath. And the Record adds, very simply: "He touched her hand and the fever left her." He is specialist in fever cases. He takes out of work its fume and fret. He has in maximum degree what one ascribed to Wordsworth: "for weary feet the gift of rest." He restores the equilibrium

of life. He brings back the pose of the spirit. And the worth of life; he refreshes the sense of that in jaded souls. He set eternal value upon "two mites which make a farthing"; upon single cups of cold water; upon the smallest outgo or investment of his friends. Not even suffering is wasted when Jesus is master of it. He declares the whole of life to be worth living. And he is the Light for the world's dark. Where he abides gloom cannot tarry. He can lighten everything except sin—which invariably shows blacker in his presence. All else shines as a landscape does at sunrise "when Jesus comes." So that, when he is Lord of all, the sea may remain, having lost its sinister aspects.

XI

CHRISTMAS PIE

EVEN Christmas must confess to special perils. For the moment I am not disposed to catalogue the most obvious dangers, such as overspending, overexertion, and overeating. I am thinking of the temptation to *overcomplacency*. As against the august meanings and lovely ministries of the season lies the subtle hazard of vainglory. Unless we are exceedingly careful—especially in our prosperity—the Christmas chimes will ring in, and the Christmas candles reveal, a phase of Pharisaism. Let a certain famous "Jack Horner" afford instance. Day was when, for the best of us, Jack's Christmas exploit was more familiar than the labors of Hercules, the globe-tour of Ulysses, the daring of Hannibal, or the triumph of Washington. How, for motives of his own, he took his station in a corner, that he might be undisturbed in his gustatory performance; with what enthusiasm he addressed himself to his holiday task; his quite primitive method of attacking the pie, thrusting his thumb into the succulent mass—of all this

the world is aware, having learned it by heart. And then his cry of complete self-approval; his acceptance, as adequate testimony to his ethical grade, of the whole treat, particularly the plum which he so triumphantly extracted! No soft pedal here: merely a joyous patting of himself on the back—the shout of a moral conqueror.

Very possibly he was what he said—despite his indefensible manners. Grown-up saints have been known to eat with their fingers, and otherwise to violate the canons of social propriety. Boorishness is no valid negation, though I think it is a deplorable accompaniment, of soul-integrity. I have often wished that the children of light were as careful as some children of darkness are of the multitudinous amenities and little chivalries that cheer the road for hard-pressed pilgrims. Courtesy costs so little and goes so far. Indeed, the opening of a door, the gracious placing of a chair, the gift of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple may be remembered disproportionately long, some would say, as contrasted with the major offices and supreme tests of character. I am not disparaging manhood in the interest of good manners. Despite his execrable lack of form, Jack Horner may have been as praiseworthy as he said he was.

All I am objecting to is his pluming of himself on the basis of the pie-award—especially the discovery of a plum. I object to the inference he drew from his good fortune. *One* plum—a good boy! By the same argument, *two* plums would prove him a *very* good boy; and *three* plums a boy so good that the angels would be jealous of earth. And I protest, at Yuletide, because the special joys and bounties of the season tend to gender in all of us a spiritual vanity altogether unwarranted and unlovely. Gratitude, of course—and a singing heart—and great pride in God out of whose heart leaped all the felicities of Christmas. All this, but not Pharisaism. The recurrence of Christmas ought to make us specially humble, *not* self-complacent.

"Not for thy righteousness," warned their wise leader as ancient Israel approached the land of their dreams and pilgrimhood. "Understand . . . that the Lord, thy God, giveth thee not this good land . . . for thy righteousness." Moses knew the human heart in its self-deceits as well as its splendid potencies. He had felt his own soul puff out with self-aggrandisement. Soon he was to pay the penalty for a ruinous inflation. Because, for a season, he forgot who gave the breath with which his iridescent bubbles had been

blown, Moses found the gate to an earthly Paradise shut in his face. Not a foot might he set within Canaan. And his cry to his people, against misinterpreting the goodness of God as reward for personal or national virtue, was wrung from his own soul. "*Not* for thy righteousness—*not for thy righteousness!*"

Taking "Little Jack Horner," then, as a typical instance of Christmas peril, I am sounding in modern ears the *caveat* of Moses. Particularly at Christmas. There is no other season perhaps, except Thanksgiving time, when we more keenly need this ancient alarum. By some strange perversity all our eminent festival seasons seem to run easily toward vainglory. At Easter the vainglory of clothes. On Fourth of July the pomp of patriotism. At Thanksgiving the pageant of possession. And at Christmas the most perilous fallacy of all—the pride of righteousness. As if, at this joyous season, virtue was most obviously and eloquently its own reward. Ah, Master Horner, in your familiar corner, with your Christmas pie open before you, and a plum in your fingers, thanks for so frank an instance of our common danger. Across your juvenile shoulders I make free to lay, vicariously, for your elders and betters the whip of Mosaic warning. "Not for thy righteousness," the

Christmas pie—and the plum! There is no other form of pride so intoxicating, so spiritually benumbing, so far-reaching in its calamity, as religious pride—the pride of goodness. "By pride the angels fell."

Well, then, if "*not* for they righteousness," for what all the lavish beneficence of the God of Christmas? For one thing, as illustration of the unmerited goodness of "the veiled God." We did not *earn* Christmas, nor *deserve* it, nor *win* it. As sanely suppose that the feathered choirs in the trees call up the sun, secure his new advent. 'Tis the presage of sunrise that starts the *matins* in the trees. "We love Him (if at all) because he first loved us." Very incoherently, if piteously, did mankind cry for a Redeemer. And, except as utter need is itself a paramount claim for relief, specially with God, man had no right to expect advent. Christmas is not a courtesy-call of God, in polite acknowledgment of many human visits at *his* door. It is a sort of supreme example of divine primacy, of celestial priority. God *first*—or there were no *seconds*. Christmas is essentially a gift. It is entirely beyond the range of bargain and sale, of earning and reward. Commercialism, even in its most specious forms, is an affront to Christmas. Once my father gave me a watch, as a reward of

merit, on Christmas Eve. Really, it was a beautiful gift, and far in excess of any conscious merit on my part. In so far as it was merely an equivalent for filial obedience it was no *gift* at all—more than a laborer's wage or a surgeon's fee. Its gift-value lay in the unearned increment. Christmas is the most inappropriate time of the year for rewarding merit. Christmas is the vernal season for love to declare itself. Reward the *good* boy at some other time. Christmas is the season for blessing the boy who has *not* been good. Christmas means *that*, or it means nothing unique and commanding. "Not for thy righteousness."

What else then? Many things, of course. Say, *incentive*. Between reward and incentive is a great gulf fixed. "It is a fearful thing to *sell* your time, your talent—a new version of the world-old tragedy of slavery." But to put a price upon *goodness* is a still more fearful and tragic thing. I think it is a species of spiritual harlotry. The Christmas of God can never be party to *that*. "Not for thy righteousness"; not as the *wages* of it. Rather as a divine provocative of it, if may be. Christmas is the fertile seed of harvest; also sun and shower, both of them undeserved and unearned, on the way toward harvest. I marvel at the

way God grows a tree. No flower that ever bloomed is reward of industry—save incidentally. The spineless cactus, the white blackberry, together with all other witnesses of the wizardry of Burbank, had never seen the day except for the outrunning bounty and patience of God. With warmth of sun and refreshment of shower, with all silent dews and subtle chemistries, God coaxes toward glory and fruition all humblest seeds. Harvest is not so truly *reward* as it is *consummation*. Christmas stands for the seed of new harvests of new life and new love. No human hand shall claim credit for the seed. A seed is not a reward; it is a miracle. Christmas implies all the celestial forces which, in beautiful confederacy, play together for the development of the seed of new dream and new fidelity. Christmas, at its best, means the very atmosphere in which new resolves and new consecrations come to bloom and fruitage.

Ah! Little Jack Horner, you had the logic reversed. The plum in your Christmas pie is not at all an encomium, a testimony—save of love outweighing any possible desert. It is not your reward for *being* a good boy; it is a *spur* to help you *be* a good boy.

XII

IN THE SHOP

THERE lodges my car, at the present writing —in the shop. Not its first experience—or its last, unless it burns up on the road or drops off a precipice. I have heard owners boast of machines that had traveled twenty thousand miles without needing to see an overalled doctor. And I do not believe the boaster; nor will you if you take time to cross-examine him a bit closely. Of course this—and, of course, that; but none of it to be charged to imperfection in the construction or adjustment of the car. Such braggarts are we when our own possessions are concerned—and such cheerful critics of others. To which all I need say is that, if our planet, in its flight, carries a passenger that does not need improvement, or a child not deserving correction, or a contrivance that does not get out of order, God is outdone on his own footstool. So large part of the world's work is repair work.

In the early chapters of Genesis is a vivid cartoon of creation. I do not take it literally. You may take it so if you choose, but I do not

so choose. It is the bold attempt of a human artist to achieve the impossible; to show us God building a universe, all splendidly new. Everything new—as the artist saw it. Perhaps that is why he could write beneath his picture, "And God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good." All new and shining and unflawed. But think of the ages since: everything in need of replenishing, of repair, of redemption. Not a river that will *stay* full; not a landscape that needs no rewashing; not a solar fire but must be restoked. A friend writes me, from the Methodist Memorial at Chateau-Thierry, of the long heart-racking process of restoring northern France; of the patient healing of her physical wounds, not to mention the less obvious wreckage. That is the sort of task God has had since the evening and the morning of creation were the first day.

Can anybody guess what earth would be like to-day unless God had been renewing it incessantly? Said Lyman Abbott, after the Messina earthquake, as I recall: "There is something divine in the way nature works to obliterate all traces of such catastrophe." *Something* divine? Say, rather, *all* divine; God active and resourceful ever, to repair damage of flood and fire, of war and pesti-

lence. Last summer I passed through a tract of land swept by forest fire. Such a blackened, mournful aspect—*except* that on every tree not utterly dead new shoots were greening. And from the scorched soil acorns were sending up their pledge of new forests. God the renewer of morning, of spring, of fruition!

What's redemption but the supreme instance of divine repair? Man, in his folly and mischief, had botched the job; had lost the pattern of his task; had lost himself. The sadness which brooded over earth before the Dayspring came was sadness of failure. Men had failed, failed of being *men*. Jesus came to restore the luster of the soul. You may watch him at it, on John and Thomas, on Zacchæus and Mary of Magdala, on Saul and Stephen. Not a member of the apostolic company but was a recovered and renewed man. Peter needed rebuilding several times—like most of us. He did not stay in good repair. Like some watches and automobiles, he no sooner got away from the Restorer than something went wrong again. "What's the matter, this time?" asks the human repairman, not always patiently, when you go back to him for fresh use of his skill. God is never like that, or we should be afraid to return to him to be set right. "He restoreth my soul,"

sang David, with a smile of wonder, I am sure.

To me, the most significant of famous sculptures is Michelangelo's *David.* And to me the most significant feature of it is that it was a failure once. David, mind you!—impetuous, naughty, vainglorious David. It might have been Moses or Elijah, Stephen or Paul, but David it was, the man who needed so many fresh starts, and who sang of a soul restored. Anyhow, the block of marble that has become a masterpiece, like its namesake, had been spoiled in the making. Its first master had tried—and *failed.* And the greater master took the same stone, marred in the working, needing more skill than for a piece of uncut stone, and invested it with his surpassing genius. Whether Michelangelo realized it or not, he was illustrating the way of God in all ages. John had to be recut, many times, by the patient Christ. Paul, the apostle, is Saul the persecutor—plus a second chance at the hand of our Lord. Jesus did not despair of redeeming wantons and prodigals. He never let go of Judas; Judas wrenched himself away into the dark. I have believed, for many years, that even Judas might have got a new name if he had waited to go back for it. That would be like the Man who prayed for his tormentors.

And unto us is committed this holy ministry of repair. Doubtless most of us prefer new work. I do. Said a woman to me, as concerning a wayward lad, "I wish I might have had him from babyhood." But even though he had been hers, flesh of her flesh, child of her travail, still she would have needed to begin with restoration. She must help repair the damage his ancestors—herself perhaps—had wrought in him before his birth. There is comparatively little new work for us to do. Most of it is rebuilding. Ours is a ministry of reconstruction. The world is thickly strewn with a clutter of fallen walls, pathetic with broken altars. Everywhere we turn, from the doors of our own hearts to the ends of the earth, we find call and challenge for redemption.

"New occasions teach new duties," of course. But the need of the average Christian is not for new vows. What he needs is to return to his old vows and *keep* them. Few are the altar-less lives. Neglected altars constitute the more imminent tragedy. When Nehemiah set his workmen at rebuilding the walls of their holy city, they needed no surveyor to show where the walls ought to rise. The ruins were plain enough—pitifully plain and appealing. To rebuild on the old foundations was the task. So, if I knew my neighbor,

through and through, I probably should suggest, not a *new* consecration but a reconsecration. I should plead for a revival of old allegiances, a rekindling of fires on old altars, a rebuilding of fallen walls.

Thomas A. Edison has spent upon the perfecting of a storage battery a large part of his useful life. But so far as I know, he has not even dreamed of a battery that needs no recharging. And I question if God expects any son of his to get on without being recharged. The best man in town has his days of depression—days of doubt, of broken confidence, of misplaced love. The walls are breached or down; and scavenger-dogs range the violated precincts of the holy city of the soul. Luther *won back* a great truth the church had lost. Wesley helped it *recover* an old passion for goodness. Everywhere and always, the need of reformation, of renewal, of redemption. Back, then, to the old task. "*Renew* a right spirit within me," cried the psalmist. There's a special joy that belongs to beginnings, and there's a cognate thrill for triumphant consummations. But, alas, the middle stages: the deadening, uneventful, monotonous middle stages where enthusiasm cools and duty loses zest! Usually I think it requires more spirit for the taking *up* of an old

duty than for the taking *on* of a new duty. Life looks very flat, seen from the mountain peak of any unusual experience, whether of joy or pain. Just to earn a living again, to be kind, to go back to church and Sunday school, to resume the old patient round—that's a supreme test of discipleship, often. To qualify men for *that* is one of the great gifts of the Divine Restorer.

XIII

RESIDENCE

"WHERE do you live?" asked a tiny lassie, looking into my face. For the moment we had seemed to run out of conversational topics. And she plumped her interrogatory at me with the *naïveté* so characteristic of childhood, and so banned by convention as we grow older. "Where do you live?" she inquired, in the same way she might have asked one's age or the size of his hat or his excuse for freckles. As I recall, my reply did not seem particularly to concern her. If I could have informed her that I had my domicile in a menagerie, or a tent among Indians, or a canal boat! But merely to give a prosy street and number, like a figure in modest wall paper! So we passed to more engrossing themes.

But her question lingered, churning over and over as a casual phrase will on the way to butter—and whey. "Where do you live?" Where does my next-door neighbor live when he is most at home? Where does *anybody* live? Town house, country residence, bungalow in the Maine woods, or quarters in a Palm Beach hotel—I am not thinking in such terms.

Usually you least know where a man really lives after you have him localized in a City Directory or on a map. Years ago, in Vermont, I craved of the then tenant of the premises an inside glimpse of the house in which my father lived as a child. In one of the rooms he had watched his mother die; in another had defied his father's scorn of Methodists; through them all he had played in childhood. You will believe my hat was off, not so much out of deference to the tenant as in reverence for the presences I seemed to feel in the lonely rooms. Yes, I went through the house, yet brought away more disappointment than joy. I had not truly seen where my father *lived*. Out on the hills where God talked with him; down the rough roads which he once traveled as mail-messenger; in the meadows or by the forge where God made him stalwart of body and soul; under the stars, on the sea when it raged—there he *lived*. You can put into a visible dwelling a very small fraction only of a son of the Eternal. Sometimes I fancy that men erect hulking mansions chiefly to hide from the world the squalor of the premises in which they live as souls. Very few of God's great children have attained their spiritual stature in big houses made with hands.

You do not get far with a measuring line when you take the size of a man by the number of cubic feet in his terrestrial residence. Most of him is outside—if he is large in spirit. Recall the familiar photograph of the cottage at Ayrshire where Burns was cradled. We have not even a print of the servant's quarters within which Lamb first breathed the air he sweetened later with his gentle soul. Epworth Rectory was a rather cramped place when all the children of Susannah Wesley were counted inside. Abraham Lincoln would probably have been disadvantaged by a mansion birthplace and an automobile to take him to school. God seems to have better chance with a man when he has to be driven out from cabin or cottage in order to find room to grow a soul. Manger-birthplace and Nazareth carpenter shop were far from accidents in the human training of the Son of God.

"Where do you live?" Somewhere, I hope, in the uncabined world of great dreams. Whoso lives *there* has ample opportunity and challenge to grow. "A man's reach must exceed his grasp," cried Browning. He must see more than he can describe. He must hear more than he can report. He must feel more than he could express in a hundred years. All great *hearts* have been great dreamers.

Every worthful improvement on earth has dropped out of the blue of somebody's daring dream. "See that thou make it after the pattern which I have showed thee on the mount," warned the Great Voice to Moses. Nobody can write a song worth singing, or carve a statue worth buying, or work a redemption worth the pains of it, until and unless he has been caught up into a third heaven where dreams have time to be born. Nothing completer than a half-life—and a poor hemisphere at that—can be lived on the street and at the bench. To his task must a man come from the land of vast distances. I am convinced that much of the duty which merely gets itself done and earns fixed wages is explained by lack of dream-moments. Dream-time is not lost time; it is seedtime; it is recharging time. "Behold the dreamer cometh," sneered the practical brothers of Joseph as they saw him approaching. Yet, in the final event, the man who kept his voting residence in the land of great dreams saved his more practical brothers from starving.

"Where do you live?" Never mind your street number or post-office address. You ought to live in the strong climate of incorruptible ideals. One day I surprised a friend in his sanctum. He had not heard my ring

or my step in the hall. And he turned, and flushed, and gathered himself together, and said, "You caught me with my coat off." No, his *coat* was on, but his *soul* was in undress. His mood was black with dismay. He was less than himself. His flag was at half-mast, for his ideals were down for the day. And no man is himself when an ideal lies dead in the house of life. Such is our frequent tragedy in the hurry and friction of the days. Almost without realizing—certainly without admitting it—we slip from our moorings. The supreme sanctions no longer command as once they did. Loving music and knowing nothing of its technique, I have often picked out a melody "by ear." I filled in the chords till they sounded correct. I played the bit over, again and again, quite pleased with my accomplishment until, at length, by request or accident, I heard the selection played as the composer intended. Then how ragged seemed my rendition! What incomplete harmonies! What lost shadings! Such is the mischance of any ordinary day in life. We lose our ideals while supposedly cherishing them. We forfeit citizenship in the land of our best. We keep drumming over the tune—lacking the strength and compelling richness of it. In the land of soul there can be no Mason and Dixon Line,

no Missouri Compromise. Whatever our actual achievement, we must live *toward* our best.

"Where do you live?" In the hearts of your friends, please God. To have domicile in the heart of a friend is rare privilege. We enjoy the hospitality of a table when it stands for the hospitality of the heart. That is your real home—in the hearts of your friends. American? Yes, probably. Marylander? Perhaps. Native of Eastern Shore, or prairie, or the land where the sun dips into the sea at evening? Well and good. But one's real home never can be located on a map. One reason that no other food ever tasted quite so good as the biscuits and cookies mother used to make was because you had such a capacious room in her heart. There you most deeply lived—in the heart of the woman who bore you, and sat far into the night with you, and taught you your prayers, and forgave you before you reached the point of admitting you were sorry. One never can be homeless when he has such place to go for solace and strength. And one never can be "homed" anywhere else than in human hearts.

'Tis the house of love. Years have gone since I heard children repeat the once familiar lines, "This is the house that Jack built." But I hear every day of the house that *love* builds

—or fails to build. Sometimes I am asked to what limits I think forgiveness ought to go. That depends—depends on what sort of house the questioner wants to inhabit. The transgressor can get on without being forgiven quite as well as the injured person can get on without practicing forgiveness. At least so God seems to feel. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*" [italics mine]. In a way, Jesus did not need to forgive his tormentors. They little deserved it. But he could not afford to die unforgiving. So he died, as he lived—and lives to-day—in the House of Love.

XIV

TAKING A CHANCE

Thus was I solicited at a recent bazaar. "Ten cents a chance," said the legend over the booth, aided and abetted by the ladies in waiting. Ten cents to win a turkey! Trade was brisk, and they did not need mine—nor get it. But when I turned away a bystander remarked, for my discomfiture perhaps, or as a sop to some other New England conscience: "*He's* a preacher. *He* wouldn't take a chance." Oh, yes, I would, even if not at a raffle. I believe in taking chances—for adequate objects. The fault I find with the so-called gambling instinct is that it displays itself on low levels. Life itself is a risk taken by God. Not death, but life is *The Great Adventure.* Sometimes in sinister sense, again in Christly, all life is what stockbrokers call "a plunge." Whether in trade or war, in love or character, this only is certain amid all incertitude—that you cannot write, beforehand, a single page of human history. For tidal movements and transits of Venus there are tables and almanacs. But for life itself there are no safe predictions.

As Martineau puts it: "There is no epic of the certainties, and no lyric without the surprise of sorrow and the sigh of fear. A world without a contingency . . . could have no hero and no saint, and enable no son of man to discover that he is a son of God." Unless life be a venture in which we invest our money without guaranteed returns, and launch argosies of hope across uncharted seas, and mount our crosses, uncertain whether they will shame or immortalize us, life were far less worthful and interesting than it is now.

At the lowest, it is the element of uncertainty which helps rescue, and add piquancy to, the commonplace day. I do not think that a power-boat ever quite takes the place of a sail-boat, for a lover of the sea. With the former, and barring accidents, the yachtsman knows when he will arrive. With the latter he never can be sure—hence, new interest for his voyage. To watch the breeze die out, or see it come toward him, darkening the sea-mirror with its breath, and not able to *make* it stay or freshen, is an essential part of the delight of yachting. Someone says that a "strike" is not more truly a demand for increased pay than for adventure, for relief from the deadening monotony of so many hours of toil for a fixed number of dollars. In a way

I can understand the passion which finds expression in gambling. Indefensible as it is, in its ordinary forms, and blighting instead of emancipating, its *root* is not altogether malign.

This at the *lowest*. At its *highest* the spirit of adventure flowers in those qualities which most ennoble life. Whoso is unwilling to take a chance will never immortalize himself in achievement. Perhaps you can raise dogs or develop a strain of poultry in a realm of comparative certitude. Even so, you will love your dog less in proportion as his longevity is assured, and obtain a lower price for your chickens when every egg is sure to hatch. And as to developing a man in the likeness of Jesus, it cannot be done unless we leave in the account those factors not statistically to be allowed for. Had the Civil War ended when and how Lincoln expected, would he tower as he does to-day in the esteem of the world? What if Chalmers and Livingstone had been able to map, beforehand, the full plans for their service? Would Paul be quite as splendid if he had foreseen and provided against the stoning at Lystra and the dungeon at Rome? Do we not rob our Lord of his unique and increasing glory when we deny the possibility of his flinching in the Garden, and of his yielding at the cold touch of the nails?

Even our courts distinguish between deliberate crimes and crimes of impulse; between the sins of *cold* blood and the sins of *hot* blood. To "fall" is one thing, and sometimes entitled to a great compassion; but dispassionately to walk down to folly or violence is far more reprehensible. Jesus himself made this distinction always. He was infinitely patient with a flare of temper or a gusty sin, but he showed no tolerance at all for deliberate evil. This was the fault of the elder brother in the parable. His was prudent, calculating, cold sin. It was the sin of the "unlit lamp and the ungirt loin." His mistake lacked even the redeeming element of adventure. Not once had he gathered all together and staked himself upon a venture. He had played safe; which may be more deadly than playing with fire. And, according to our Lord, there is more hope for a sinner who has transgressed *passionately* than for the Pharisee who has never been out of sight of the Temple, and has measured out evil with precise, deliberate hand. To live with sin dispassionately; to offer one's soul to wrong, without heat; to take advantage of another's misstep; to harbor jealousy and plan revenge is arch-treason, lacking the saving grace of adventure.

Except for a spirit of high enterprise, the

cost of which none can forecast, no shining successes are won. Carnegie put into the vernacular a solemn truth of all best effort: "Always do a little more than you have to." I can understand the economic advantage of a minimum wage, and the engineer's quest of minimum friction in his machinery, and the government's plan for minimum tariff rates. But life's great preferments and its most substantial joys are impossible until folks break out into maximums. Dreams must be worth hazards on the way to fulfillment. An achievement that cannot justify a risk is poverty-poor. Let go, even at peril of failure! Hearing that a certain officer of his had been wounded, Stonewall Jackson observed: "Wounded, you say? Then it must have been by an accidental discharge of his duty." Many a man lets himself down with consciousness of duty done. Beyond the outposts of ordinary fidelity lie the vast reaches of privilege which eager souls claim for themselves. Henry Martyn had left the beaten path of dutifulness when he staked his life on the success of his missionary venture. Bishop Bashford burned his life out in his passion to give light to China. Theodore Roosevelt, whose birthday has recently been celebrated with freshened appreciation, won his eminence in American history

by the chances he took for great causes. Paul's laurels are those of the venturesome spirit. Christ's cross stands for the utmost adventure of the Son of God. He might have saved his life—and been forgotten.

A friend of mine declares that he has given up the practice of philanthrophy. He says he is convinced that it "does not pay." Worse than that! Commercially speaking, it *rarely does* pay. At least, you cannot be certain that it *will* pay. It is a venture, a hazard, a plunge. He who expects his bread to come back, as such, and soon, would best not cast it upon the waters. Every mission hall, every far-flung battle line of human service, every great church stands for a certain kind of extravagance. According to the standards of the critics of an ancient spikenard gift, the most Christly enterprises of the church are wasteful. But what aromatic fragrance the world would have missed had the church been less prodigal with her treasure! The surest way to kill a church is to cut the nerve of its adventure in the spirit of its Lord.

Then, there is the supreme venture of all—a man's venture upon Christ. I am weary of hearing what a quiet, uneventful affair is discipleship. Chesterton thinks the church has made grave error in reducing to comfortable

terms the requirements of religion. Nowadays, the church seems to lack challenge for red-blooded men. We shall need to reemphasize the risks and the cost of a Christian life. Real men do not want "to dream, to drift"; they want dangers to face and "loads to lift." "Sell all that thou hast." "He that loveth father or mother more than me." "Take up thy cross"—such is the way Jesus talked to his contemporaries. Why not talk it still, in the name of the most adventuring Man that ever trod this planet?

XV

BREAKING RANKS

Along the trail which *The Covered Wagon* took toward Oregon, the author glimpsed for us traces of tragedies—bones and hurried graves. Of deliberate choice or bitter necessity the ranks of earlier caravans had been broken *en route*. Always just such losses must be reckoned with. Part of The Mayflower's intended company faltered at sailing time; and the feet of two Pilgrims actually never touched the shore of the new land. Abraham had a similar experience in the pioneer movement immortalized by him. 'Twas his own father, Terah, who dropped out of the procession; Terah, the man who had been first to say, "Let's go," and who headed the emigrant throng. For the first part of the way Abraham was the trailer of Terah, as, later, Lot was of Abraham. Normally, we should have expected to hand the laurel to the father as initiator of so significant an enterprise. Yet the biography of the elder is soon written. In full sense of the word, Terah never "arrived." For reasons of his own, I suppose, he paused midway.

Haran was good enough for him. In Haran, *en route* to Canaan, he pitched his tent. And in Haran he died and was buried.

Frankly, we are not particularly concerned about him, for the reason that he never arrived at a great destination. Ours is an exceedingly pallid sort of interest in printers before Guttenberg, in steamboats earlier than Fulton's, in evolutionists prior to Charles Darwin, in electrical experimenters antedating Franklin, in prophets further back than the major prophets of our day. Frequently it is enough for us to know of a man that he *failed*. We have few hymns to the conquered. So long as there are plenty of tapers still *burning* we do not bother much about the tapers that *went out*. Yet, taking this ancient figure for a theme, I should call it only less important to know why Terah failed than to discover why Abraham succeeded. This man who came out of Chaldea at the front of the new colonists—I want to ascertain why he never reached Canaan. I assume that his call was as valid as Abraham's. Unfortunately, I cannot quote the precise phrasing of his call—as of Abraham's, for example. This is one of the manifold pities attaching to the man who fails. We are rarely interested in the things God may have said to such as miss their destination. Yet we

cannot afford to doubt the reality and cogency of their call. No man breaks with the established order at Ur and starts for some veritable Canaan of plenty and usefulness except and until God wakes him and sends him forth. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest," said Moses in his beautiful valedictory. Moses was thinking in terms of his own race. But he could have hardly chosen his figure more wisely if he had in mind God's relation to men of all ages and climes. The Divine Spirit in us is forever thrusting us out because we *are* eagles in breed; because his strength is in us and we were "built for flight."

"Let us alone," protests a chorus of modern voices, perpetuating the outcry of the infesting spirits when Jesus disturbed their human tenement. "Let us alone! Let us make money, honestly if possible, but by all means make money. Let us have done with agitation that hurts the market and keeps investors awake nights. Let us possess our souls, and particularly our property, in peace." But to be so let alone is to deny the eagle in us. If we were ordinary fowls, God might permit us to grow fat in farmyard and runways. Because there is in us so much of divinity—the genius of goodness, capacity for growth, "the power of an endless life"—God superbly

declines to let us alone. He is forever driving us out, as Terah, of old. By all sorts of voices, by the sting of conscience, by the illumination that sickness sometimes yields, by the Macedonian cry of the broken and benighted, God says, "Get thee out . . . unto a land that I will show thee."

But the call of Terah was not simply veracious: it came first, before Abraham's. Terah was the real pioneer. He started the migration forever associated with the name of his son; as David planned and provided for the Temple that bore Solomon's name. What God had in store for Terah we cannot say. Terah himself never found out. His pilgrimhood, so far as he was concerned, ended at Haran. Oh the requiems to be sung over pioneers who never fully arrived! The fame and sight of Saint Peter's at Rome sends one's thoughts to Michelangelo. Nor shall we pay too high honor to that rare genius who, despite the seductions of his age, kept his own soul white. Yet, he was not the originator of that mammoth pile. He built upon broad foundations laid by Peruzzi and Brabante. Nay, back of them was a now unknown architect who first dreamed of that vast temple. Caxton with his successful printing press went only a little further than his unsung predecessors. Harvey

was not the discoverer of the circulation of the blood: to Servetus, perhaps, belongs the credit. Who shall tally the unsuccessful airmen to whom the Wright brothers were indebted? Who can call the full roll of those hot-hearts for whom Garrison became, at length, a voice?

Among the famous evangelists of my early ministry was B. Fay Mills. It is not too much to say that a multitude once revered him as their spiritual father. They are on the way to Canaan or there already, because he started them. And yet he, the man who set their feet treading the highway, stopped at Haran and foreswore his Lord. The prophets of the new world-order will not have the benefit of truer visions than have been accorded to some of us. The regenerators of the church from formalism and mammon-worship will be no more richly endowed than are we who complain —and *do nothing* to bring on the better day. "Hold fast that thou hast," cried the angel to the church at Philadelphia, "that no man take thy crown"—the crown of the first-called.

One lesson more. The Canaan that beckoned alluringly to Terah never saw him. He died *en route.* Read the grim, laconic record: "Terah . . . went forth . . . to go into the land of Canaan, . . . and came to

Haran and dwelt there, . . . and died in Haran." Of the locality I am not sure. Some say that Haran was a sizable city on a great river—like many another metropolis that has cost ardent pilgrims their dreams. I do not know. But I can locate Haran on the map of human life. It is the place where men stop urging forward; where the fire of a great purpose dies out of the soul, and the call of Canaan becomes vague and uncompelling.

The Lodge of Sorrow, perhaps. For, the worst thing that death does to us is not to rob us of our loved ones, but to kill our faith. Sometimes, the Canaan of so many burning hopes and eager pledges becomes distant, unlovely and undesired with the death of a friend. Always there is danger of stopping at the place of grief the forward movement. The Haran of bereavement lodges many a pilgrim destined on toward the fair fields and radiant skies of Paradise. Sometimes Haran is "The House of Mirth." Only God has census of the folks who have ended their pilgrimhood there. If it be tragic to lose the trail as result of sorrow, what shall be said of losing the trail as the price of pleasure? Not for me to furnish list of forbidden joys. The list is never the same for two people. But whatever the form self-indulgence may take, money is the

smallest part of its cost. The *tragic* expense must be computed in terms of life. Then there is the Haran of business engrossment. And many the pilgrims who have tarried there. We must make a living of course. But we must make a life also. Near the office door or beside the desk of many a merchant-prince is a tombstone, unseen but pathetic. It tells where a man buried the highest dream of a son of God. It is Haran for a modern Terah. As God said to Abraham, "Get thee out to the land which I will show thee."

XVI

THE VOCAL GOD

In one of his blue moods concerning things in general and England in particular, Carlyle sighed: "Oh, that God would speak to us as he spoke to men of olden time!" Very plaintive, plausible, and pertinent! Most of us could put up the same grievance, providing we were really pious enough to carry our perplexity so far as God. The times are out of joint, and God seems to offer a convenient target for our reproaches. Evidently Carlyle forgot that the divine language which looks so plain in the Bible was by no means self-evidencing to men of Bible times. Incidentally, yet in most graphic fashion, the Bible confesses what dismal work ancient worthies and unworthies made of understanding the speech of God. Perhaps they were more religious than we. At least they lived in days before everything had been explained. Their world pulsated with mystery; and, amid all sorts of unexplained marvels, men strained their ears for a clear word from beyond the veil. Otherwise, the

advantage is with us later tenants of this hurrying planet.

One might properly ask what, precisely, that canny Scot meant by wishing that God speak nowadays as when earth was younger. Must he split a cloud or spring a seven-hued arch in the sky? He does both, every summer. Must he credential himself by setting furze-bushes afire, and print his commandments on tables of stone? "Thou shalt see greater" marvels any ordinary day. Must he literally walk into our homes and shops as Jesus did, multiply loaves on a hillside and sit corporeally on a well-curb? Why, every land where Christ is lived is a holier land than Palestine. The trouble is not with God's speech, but with our ears.

The man whose plaint against God I have quoted above gives us a rare glimpse of himself sitting with his idolized mother, whole evenings, "each smoking a long church warden, in absolute content, yet without a word passing." Silence? *Words* might have jarred upon the eloquence of her mere presence. The tea on the table, the unsmoking lamp, the books where he liked to find them, the darning in his hose—in short, the hundred things a mother does for love of her boy—*all spoke for her*, though she uttered not an audible word. At least, so I remember my mother. Strange

to say, I cannot quote many actual words of the woman who bore me. But I recall the ways in which she expressed motherliness to me. Perhaps it was my favorite viand, or a new tie on my dresser, or a fresh patch in a garment. Or the cooling touch of her hand on my head, or the pain in her eyes when I was disobedient. Perhaps it was her sigh, her prayer, her smile. Of course, she must speak with her lips also. What would I not give to *hear* her call my name again, as in the unforgotten years long gone! All I am saying is that I remember her to-day, not so much for the things she said as for the mother she was: not her words, but herself.

Thus, over against the Carlylean grievance that "God sits in heaven and does nothing," I should like to put reminder of the myriads of things he does every day. Against our sullen fault-finding with his silences, set the countless modes in which he declares himself. The loaf on your table—does it say nothing except concerning modern methods of baking and of intensive farming? Then you must have a poor ear for deep overtones.

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower
And the sun—and the Father's will."

That is what daily bread said to one of the most delicately attuned spirits that ever called from a Christian pulpit. Every honeybee knows by instinct when the temperature rises enough to threaten its wax. And every twentieth bee glues its feet to the floor of the hive and sets its wings fanning, until the temperature within the hive falls below danger point to the cells. We have recently discovered how wise is the bee. But every such tiny creature has been telling, for thousands of years, how wise God is, and how plainly he talks to his smallest creatures. I do not see how anybody can turn a sod or watch the snow fall or lift a telescope—to say nothing of adventures into the realms of profounder study—and escape the voices of God.

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush aflame with God,
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes."

Ah, that's the trouble. We do not really look. We fail to listen. We stand, with shoes on, repining at the secrecies of God, when the fact is that God *never* said to prophet and patriarch such staggeringly wonderful things as he is saying to-day.

How unequivocally he speaks concerning *sins!* It was this same gruff Carlyle who said,

passing through a certain hospital ward in which bestiality had its frank record: "God Almighty writes a very plain hand." You can read that handwriting any day. You do not need commandments graven in stone by the finger of God. You shall find some of them printed bold on hospital records, in the faces of men and women in the street, in squalor and heartbreak and shame. Helen Keller affirms that she never fails to receive a definite psychic impression from a casual handshake. She says she can tell instantly whether the stranger is true or false, clean or unclean. Science declares that a change of mental state alters the chemistry of perspiration. Hate produces one of the deadliest poisons. Anger throws out a brownish substance. An hour of intense passion generates irritant enough to kill a hundred men. So the pathologists say. At any rate, any experimentor with evil can testify to the moral nausea which initial indulgences induce. 'Tis God's voice protesting. One must drown out that plea before he can be comfortable in his own wrongdoing, Everybody is familiar with such language of God. "God Almighty writes a very plain hand" and speaks with no uncertain voice concerning sins.

So with respect to *suffering*. Most of us

have tried a hand, occasionally—some try unceasingly—at building an imaginary world in which pain and frustration have no place. Nor would I interdict such Utopian dreams, providing we live earnestly in the world that is and then proceed to reduce to a minimum all unnecessary pain in our part of it. But can one be sure it were a better world with all suffering eliminated? One day George Matheson, the blind preacher-poet, sat in his physician's office to hear this: "If there is one face you want to see for the last time, hurry." And Matheson entered the Gethsemane of blindness. And from his Calvary he wrote:

> "Oh, love that seekest me through pain,
> I do not ask to fly from thee."

Just what he could have written had his sight been restored, I do not know. But he never could have written those wonderful lines. Ex-Governor Patterson says that the iron in his own soul broke his hold on the cup and made him an apostle of abstinence. Doubtful if God ever qualifies an apostle except through some sort of anguish. Indeed, the Book declares that the Captain of our salvation was perfected through suffering. To whom would you go if you were lonely or penitent or broke on the wheel? The answer is a word of

God. It tells what he thinks of pain as a ministrant.

And of *service*. We were built for service, as truly as telephones and railways are. "So long as we love we serve." And so long as we serve we grow. Everybody knows the atrophy that falls upon any unused member of body or mind. That blight is the terrible judgment of the good God. He cannot afford to waste powers. The sentence passed upon the man who buried his talent is inevitable and just. "Take, therefore . . . from him." Moreover, happiness falls that way. No selfish life ever touched the springs of joy. The gladdest people in the world are they who give themselves away in a bridal with the needy. And in terms of their joy God is speaking.

XVII

THE MOST INTERESTING THING IN THE WORLD

I REFER to goodness. In its way, it is the most universally discussed—and debated—possession and practice on earth. That most people work at it consistently does not follow of course. Sometimes they seem more solicitous about their neighbors' moral status than about their own; just as one may find bad fathers whipping their boys for following the paternal example, and undevout mothers insisting that their daughters say their prayers. Human nature is a strange admixture, never more confusing than in praise of goodness. My contention is merely that nearly everybody is *interested* in it. No novelist would dare publish a story in which all the characters were unlovely, nor a dramatist perpetrate a play full of unrelieved scoundrels. At the lowest there must be saints to set off the iniquities of sinners. The other day as a salesman was leaving my office—without the order he hoped for—he paused to say, facetiously, "Be good." It was a rather unusual

leave-taking, as between strangers. And after he had disappeared and forgotten probably, I found myself wondering, quizzically. Was this his usual *congé?* Did he mean anything at all when he made a similar remark in other offices, more than when we say, "Good morning," regardless of the weather, or "Hope you are well," when the health of the other is matter of supreme indifference to us? Had he and I paused to discuss the matter, could we have agreed upon a definition of goodness? Could he have written a legible prescription for the keeping or recovery of moral health? Would the ethics of a community concern him as much as a large order of supplies? I wondered, as his parting phrase sounded in my ears.

"Be good." How familiar the words were! They sent me back to childhood days and their usual admonitions. I do not suppose that I was essentially different from other lads in outlook or conduct. Neither saint nor reprobate, probably. Restless under discipline, disliking commandments, generous in spots, illogical about consequences, intending to do right unless countervailing considerations proved too strong—and frequently admonished to "be good"! I do not venture to guess how many times it was necessary to remind me;

nor how richly I profited by such salutary counsel. Most times, I fancy, the advice ran like water down a roof, fertilizing nothing in its course. Good counsel usually overstocks the market, there being so many more givers than takers. In cynical moods I have vowed I never again would attempt to tell anybody his duty—especially about "being good."

Name any human interest you please—business, politics, music, art, love, war—and you will find none of them claim so many devotees as goodness does. Darwin confessed that music and poetry bored him, yet he was tremendously concerned about ethical values. Multitudes who would not go outdoors to look at a rainbow, or "stoop to pick a posy," or spend five minutes on Mount Blanc, are nevertheless touched by moral issues. When the man *outside* the church maintains that he is as good as the man *inside*, he inadvertently confesses a great kinship. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty" plays upon that spirit incessantly: wooing, troubling, soothing, angering, blessing, blighting, but failing not to challenge. I doubt if any human ever was totally insensitive to goodness.

Moreover, this most interesting thing in the world is *one*, not many. It may wear different styles, but the essence is the same. All the

music in the world is played upon seven full tones and five half tones. If any genius in harmonics went further, he could not make himself understood. There are but seven colors in the rainbow, or three "primary colors," as science calls them. All the brilliant effects produced by dyer and painter are merely variations played upon three primary colors. In the human body is no element that may not be found in a dog's body or plant. So in the wide world there is but one goodness. The mother of the Gracchi holding herself aloof from the shams of her age; Monica yearning and agonizing for her wayward Augustine; Epictetus, "born a slave, maimed in body and dear to the immortals," and John the Beloved leaning upon the breast of his Lord, are full brothers and sisters in goodness. Strike far enough, past creed and fashion, and you always touch the same essence. I hear churchmen talk sometimes as if Jesus came to teach a new sort of goodness. The thesis is desperately false. Least of all in goodness is there anything new under the sun. Differing routes to it; variant expressions of it, but the same thing essentially. Enoch ought to understand Saint Stephen's language, and Buddha, Phillips Brooks'. It is claimed that all modern fruits are elaborations of small originals. The most

primitive apple was still an apple. Burbank's white blackberry is still a blackberry in all but color. And the Maréchal Niel rose is merely a perfected wild rose on the hillside. So a Christian is a good man raised by Christ to the highest power.

But the truest method of achieving this most interesting thing in the world is always positive. Negative means have had their day—and not yet passed away. This is the weakness, I think, of so many of the commandments—anywhere. They begin and end with repression. They tell explicitly what *not* to do—always a partial and disappointing process. Whereas, Christianity, at its best, is not a repression but an expression. "Walk in the spirit," adjured the great apostle, "and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." "This do," said Jesus, "and thou shalt live." There are two contrasting ways of dealing with a sour-apple tree. You may knock off all the disagreeable fruit and cut back the limbs; and what remains is still sour-apple tree. Or you may make use of all native strength of the tree, and graft in new stock, and fertilize the roots—and not need to pucker your mouth when you taste the new product. Similarly, the medicine of yesteryear believed immensely in leeches, in cuppings, in starvings and dread-

ful doses. Medicine, to-day, treats nature as chief ally; stimulates instead of stabbing her; forwards in every possible way the work that nature is trying to perform. Once we thought enough had been done when a criminal was put behind prison bars. Now we admit that penology fails in so far as it omits to put new impulses into the transgressor. So there are teachers who act as if their major function were to trim a pupil; just as there are parents who never seem to get beyond the philosophy of forbidding.

In the basement of our hospital is a big stack of crutches, constantly increasing. Some of them confess mutely the failure of all human efforts to save limb or life. But the great majority represent ability to discard a crutch. In a triumphant sense owners of the latter do not need such treacherous supports any more. When a patient can walk he scorns crutches. And it is the throwing away of the crutch because its owner does not have further use for it—of this I am thinking just now. If we cannot evoke the best, by repressive methods, from a tree or a malefactor, a child or a skeptic, why thus expect it in the life of goodness? Goodness is the most positive, dynamic thing on earth. Never shall I forget my heart-breaking experience in trying to redeem an

old schoolmate. We had shared the same seat in school, called upon the same girls, carried each other's secrets. He was such a handsome, lovable chap. And when, many years later, he came back, bleared-eyed, shabby, broken, my soul claimed him for God. And, for a time, I helped him repress his old appetite. He came to church. He accepted religion as a *yoke*, chiefly. But I never was able to help him feel religion as *power*. He never "walked in the Spirit." Hence he fell—and stayed prone. Nothing short of what Bushnell called "the expulsive power of a new affection" will make a man deeply and vigorously good.

XVIII

TOO FULL FOR SOUND AND FOAM

YEARS ago, toward the close of an evening of rare fellowship, one of the sunniest men I ever knew recited four stanzas, then new, from the pen of Edwin A. Robinson.

"When Richard Cory went down town,
The people on the pavement looked at him;
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean, favored and imperially slim.

"And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said
'Good morning.' And he glittered as he walked.

"And he was rich, yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace.
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

"So, on we worked and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm, summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head."[1]

He finished with a queer choke in his voice and a quizzical smile. You could have cut the silence that ensued. I think we scarcely knew

[1] Used by permission of author.

which way to look. As if, unwitting, he had afforded us furtive but piercing peep into his soul. Was he of the ready smile and outreached hand also staggering under a load unguessed by his intimates? Had he been made acquainted with that Cimmerian darkness out of which despair breaks tragically sometimes? None save a consummate actor—or a plagued spirit—could repeat the lines as he did, that night. And I found myself wondering, with awe, what burdens, what bitterness, what disillusionings would be revealed in that small group of friends if each soul were suddenly and ruthlessly unveiled.

There are no charmed lives. What seem so are perhaps merely braver and more self-reserved than those who always float their flag at half-mast. There was Mark Twain, for example, writing his dry humors out of a heart torn by the loss of his idolized Susie. And Charles Broadway Rouss, rich enough to buy anything else except sight for his eyes. And Byron, gifted with poesy as few others, yet cursed and embittered by a club foot. And John Wesley, leading a movement of world-significance, but stung by domestic tribulation. And Carlyle, brilliant, trenchant, prophetic—and hopelessly dyspeptic. And Julius Cæsar, remaker of the world's map—

and epileptic. And Paul, the superb, with his inescapable thorn. And then, at the top of all lists, that Man who has been loved as no other Son of woman, and followed by more millions than ever marched after all earth's famed conquerors, but marred in soul as no other man, and lifting the world from the cross that killed him.

"I have long had three wishes," mused Bishop Wiley, once, as he and a friend stood looking into a photographer's window. "One is that I might have five months of perfect health; another is that I might have, some time, five weeks of perfect rest; and the third is that I might have five minutes of perfect satisfaction with myself." Perhaps Kipling was thinking of such paradoxes when he spoke of a certain kind of success as "one of the most terrible calamities that can overtake a sane, civilized, white man." At least, I make sure that envy would often die of shame could it but glimpse the burden of dumb misery in the life it envies. A fetter is still a fetter, though it be forged of gold and set with jewels. Sorrow is sorrow, whether met in a palace or a cabin. And defeat is defeat notwithstanding all philosophic glamours that may be flung about it.

But I am thinking, just now, of these heart-

aches that lie too poignant and deep for tears, too chaste for vulgar display. You will find one beautiful instance in the life of Joseph when Benjamin arrived in Egypt. One can imagine how the elder brother's heart leaped in greeting. After all the years and travails, this! Joseph was like to burst with mingled sorrow and joy: pent sorrow and wild joy. Had his been a shallower nature, he might have let go in public. But the record is immeasurably richer. It says: "He entered into his chamber and wept there, and he washed his face, and went out, and restrained himself." To the cloister he took his tears; to the world he showed what Stevenson calls a "glorious morning face."

God be thanked for a spirit like that—to be willing that others shall sing—nay, to help them lift their song, though weariness of heart be our portion. "Didn't you bury your little girl, this summer?" expostulated a well-meaning friend to a mother who, with her two surviving children, was watching a parade. "Yes," came the splendid reply, while the unhealed, inward wound bled afresh, "but I have no right to bury my *living* children by denying them pleasure." Ordinarily, it is unfair for us to drag our miseries across the paths of others. They, also, have their burdens and pangs.

Or, recall that lovely glimpse of David, emerging from the death-chamber of Bath-sheba's boy, triumphant. The servants did not understand. They even ventured to take their king to task. "What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." So speaks the Christian, centuries before Jesus was born of the line of David. I well recall my first use of mourning emblems. I went back to college wearing a new black suit and a band on my hat. But as I recall how vast was my loss I am half ashamed that I made it public at all. And if an equivalent grief came to me now, I hope I should wear the emblem of it not on sleeve or hat, but hid in my heart where all true grief belongs. 'Tis the lesser sorrows, if any, over which we can afford to be punctilious as to appearances.

One picture more from the wonderful Album of portraits. It is that of Jehoram on the walls of his beleagured city—so calm and unharassed,

as it seemed. And the people in the street looked up in envy at their resplendent monarch. Till, one dreadful day, in an excess of grief for his subjects, "he rent his clothes," after Oriental fashion, "and behold, he had sackcloth, within, upon his flesh." Sackcloth *within*, hid away from vulgar sight; grief-symbol worn next to the heart that was torn—that's the royal way. Though this were the only kingly thing about a rather bad monarch like Jehoram, it was kingly enough to stir us to emulation. I do not need to see my brother's sackcloth, nor he mine—until and unless some furious gust of anguish sets it visible—and then, perhaps, only for a moment.

> "Go, bury thy sorrow,
> The world has its share."

Let the world remember us, if it can, for our brave smile, for our persistent song, for our counsels of cheer, as it remembers our crowned Master.

XIX

STABBED AWAKE

For a study of sleeping beauties—and others, take an ordinary railway coach. Every form of obliviousness, partial or complete, may there be viewed. Passengers hunched in seat corners, doubled up perilously like clasp knives, lopping or dozing bolt upright, trying to sleep and making a poor fist of it, or succeeding audibly. Ye gods, the spectacle! Surely, Morpheus cannot be a fastidious god as to the attitudes and approaches of his votaries. Moreover, he is shrined in proportion to the things his worshipers miss by the way. Moor and fen, crag and torrent, frowning height and smiling meadow, Babel-like towers scraping the clouds and houses by the side of the road—all these racing past car windows for throngs who "wot not of their presence, muse and sleep." So much to see and so little seen except as some challenging voice rings through the car. So many sleepers through hours of privilege and destiny. Even dreams never can come true till we wake; and often we rouse too late, with the prophet hammering at the door.

But speaking of railways recalls to me the belated confession of a famous magnate. Few, I suppose, are aware that the man whose name is on the sides of ten thousand Pullman cars had a brother Joseph, a clergyman. Their generation has passed; and whereas the railroad man can hardly be forgotten—so long as we pay present rates for special luxury on the road—the preacher is but dimly recalled, as "one whose name was writ in water." Yet, tradition says that, when their lives were drawing on toward evening, George wrote to Joseph: "You were right and I was wrong. You chose service, and I chose money, and you have chosen wisely." Just what George M. Pullman meant, and all that he meant, is not for me to say. In one of its aspects his confession may not have been fair to himself. The modern world needs trains as well as preachers. Part of a practical gospel must be carried by rail and steamship. 'Twere a pity if the most we could do for Russia in famine days, or Japan in her catastrophe, consisted in long distance prayers and resolutions of sympathy. Service, even Christian service, is an immense word. It includes the cup of cold water as truly as the evangel of redemption. Indeed, redemption itself is as manifold as human need is. And the railroad man may have done more

for humanity than he dreamed of or intended to do—though the end in view were entirely selfish.

Still his admission is startling. Too late to alter the course of his life,

> "A bolt shot back somewhere in his breast,
> And a lost pulse of feeling stirred again."

Too late apparently he would have liked to change his dream. The tragedy of life is the tardiness of moral awakenings. "If I had only known," groaned Carlyle, facing what he came to consider his inexcusable dereliction. As with certain mysterious diseases of the body, so with the disorders and distempers of the soul. Not in a day or a week, or a year, perhaps, do they declare themselves. Only as a malignant germ of evil gets into the blood-stream of life, recording its damage in soul-tissue, is the malady recognized. Moreover, the victim of moral infection is under necessity of doing what the most skillful physician declines to attempt—to diagnose his own disease. A priest in the confessional, be he never so sincere, may totally misread the symptoms on the other side of the wicket. None but God, interpreting a man to himself, can lay bare the pathology and prognosis of a sin. And, alas! we are so used to the voice of the Great Physician that often we disregard his counsels.

From the dreary isle of Saint Helena comes the desolate confession of a broken empire-builder, that he had founded his empire stupidly—upon force. The confession itself, however, if authentic, is scarcely more significant than the tardiness of it. No hint of such winnowed wheat of ideal, on the "little Corporal's" part, until his military campaigns were over. Not when his eyes flashed with victory at Jena and Austerlitz; not when piling snowflakes broke his battalions in Russia; not even when he tasted exile on Elba, or when his lines wavered at Waterloo; only when defeat gnawed his soul into despair did he admit the wrongness of his ambition. How patient God is while we are learning *what* ails us, or that *anything* at all ails us! How slowly we wake to realization of quests not worth their cost! And how fictitious dream-values haunt us even while we are supposedly awake! Three score and ten years are commonly too few to teach us our lesson. For, as Hugo is quoted as saying, at eighty: "I have just learned to live, and now I must die." Some, day, however, soon or late, the prophet stands at the door, bearing a message from God.

To bring such a message is, distinctively, the prophet's business. Whether by pointed pleasure or by piercing pain, it is a prophet's

function to "stab us wide awake." Not his garb or his dialect but his message counts. Wilberforce tells of sitting, far into the night, at a gaming table. No knock sounded at the *outer* door, but through some inner portal entered a strange disgust. Suddenly he felt the pity of wasting money and manhood needed by his age. He rose, flung down his cards and entered into partnership with God for a world's redemption. A recent bishop of Uganda was in early life a promising artist. To get a canvas into the Royal Academy was his topmost ambition. His last artistic effort was called "Homeless," the figure of a young woman, clutching a baby to her breast and fighting through storm, with every door shut against her. As his canvas neared completion, the piteous figure became real, and the cold he was attempting to image bit into his soul. "God help me," he said: "why don't I go out and look for lost people?" And the easel lost a devotee and Africa gained a bishop of apostolic zeal.

One night in a farmhouse, in Vermont, there waited, half crouching by the stove, an old man. Fire burned low, but he seemed not to notice, his heart was so warm. His usual bed hour had passed, long since, and still he waited for the lifting of a latch. At length came the crunching of a strong step in the

snow outside, the latch clicked, and a stalwart fellow framed the doorway, shaking the snow from his shoulders. Greetings over, there ensued one of the great silences that quiet the soul. "Boy, I waited up for you," said the elder with solemn voice. "You must preach the gospel." One could hear soul speak to soul. And, against preferences and predilection, the young man turned away from the law to the ministry, shining for others till his own torch burned out, early, as the price of his sacrificial labors. "Nothing is more certain," said Herbert Spencer, "than that we are ever in the presence of an infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed." And nothing else is more certain than that we are continually sought out, interrupted, commanded by prophets of that same Being. We cannot hope to travel fast and far enough to escape the prophet's visit. In remotest seclusion and at most unlikely season the prophet is at the door.

Sometimes he comes in a great joy. Partner to a rich love is always an ennobling reverence. He does not deeply and nobly love who is not impelled to bend his knee before the object of his love. How many new fathers and mothers might borrow, for their own, Simeon's beautiful testimony: "Mine eyes have seen

thy glory!" As I sat beside a friend who was approaching his golden wedding, his voice caught, and his eyes flooded. "You must excuse me," he said, "I was thinking of the fifty years." Or, it may be a grim disappointment that plays prophet to the soul, as Nathan to David, as John Baptist to Herod. Breaking a lance against all usual interpretations of it, a clever writer declares that Ecclesiastes is not a pessimistic work. He says its author is merely measuring, against eternal values, the folly and futility of most that men strive for. At least, blessed be that chagrin whose keen edge cuts away the lacquer of unreality. But, preeminently, is Jesus the prophet of the soul. Speaking through conscience or pain or redemptive overture, he cries to the depths within us. As concerning the evening of the first Easter, the Record declares: "The same day, at evening, the *doors being shut*, came Jesus, and stood in their midst." He has a way of doing that. He is "The Unavoidable Christ." Though it be true that our age has signally shut the door in his face, still is that Face more vivid and arresting than ever before. More real than Cæsar, more alive than the king of England, when Jesus stands at the door of the soul, its greatest Prophet has come.

XX

UNPUBLISHED NAMES

Most folks dislike anonymity. They enjoy seeing their names and faces in print. I never quite believed a certain choice and eminent friend who told me he never read a published article about himself. Men no vainer than the rest of us employ Press Clipping Bureaus to keep them posted concerning personal allusions to them in the press. Given our choice in the matter, few of us would *choose* to blush unseen and waste our fragrance on the desert air—even though we were born to such obscurity. Few, I say. Not even those who make most ado about keeping their benefactions anonymous. When a donor quotes merrily a certain beautiful warning against letting the left hand know what the right hand doeth, I wonder what he is trying to hide—whether the smallness of his gift or his unwillingness to establish a precedent in generosity. "Don't publish my name," I've been cautioned, many times, "or I shall be besieged with applicants." Of course gifts should be modestly made—or they are not truly gifts

at all. But I personally cannot enjoy tokens that bear no name. I need to thank somebody. And, ordinarily, that "somebody" is needing to be thanked. And as concerning anonymity in general, few can be said to enjoy it. A little advertising, now and then (oftener if possible), is relished by the best of men.

Hence I assume that certain unnamed coadjutors of the great apostle, notwithstanding their substantial piety, would have preferred specific mention, instead of being lumped together as "others, my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life." Of course they would so prefer, being human. Yet all they got was a sweeping generalization as above recited. Now, it may be that the writer was embarrassed by want of space, or that he was chary of praise, or even that some of the names had escaped him. I suspect, however, that the real reason for omitting a complete roll call was far more significant. How can anybody make a list of his fellow-laborers? There are faces framed in gold in the album the heart keeps. Wake us suddenly, in the night, and there are names we call instinctively, before we have rubbed our eyes. None so poor to be done reverence by somebody. Parent, teacher, pastor, classmate, lover, child—we can recall them, everyone. But such are not all the

fellow laborers to whom we are beholden. For most of us the list would be too long for chronicle; for recognition even. By a thousand ties, more of them unseen than visible, are we bound to our fellows. There is a *cameraderie* with men of other ages and distant climes; a partnership with every man or woman who is living the life and doing the will of the Father. Out of every nation, kindred and tribe run to us lines of mutuality of interest and labor.

And it is with that larger fraternity, that anonymous company, the names of whose members are in no book save the Book of Life, that I am concerned just now. In the presence of so vast a throng we need consciousness of a large God. What a tedious time we have learning to love such a God! We are afraid to let go of his skirts lest he withdraw his presence. In childhood most of us prayed a very small and personal prayer:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep:
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take."

Count the personal pronouns, please. Eight of them; I, me and mine—like the soliloquy of the rich fool. Such a narrow-horizoned petition, broad enough for a child, perhaps,

but shameful for a grown-up son of the Father. That's the trouble; so many of us never broaden our prayer. *Our* God is the Friend of folks in our set, who think as we do and have been educated in the same tenets. It does not surprise us at all that God should be interested in us. What puzzles us is his concern for Hindus and Chinamen. When Luther was asked about the possible advantage of praying for Turks, he replied that he "did not suppose the practice would hurt either of them." John Knox's immortal cry for Scotland failed to mention England. Glory enough for both of them that God should make a good job in *Scotland.* In one of his famous sermons Bushnell suggested, half apologetically, that God has outside saints—such as Aurelius and Seneca and Socrates. To confess, as Peter was finally brought to do, that "everyone that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him," registers almost incredible progress toward the mind of Christ.

"I cannot admire a petty bookkeeping God," sneered Emerson. Nor can anybody else *admire* that sort of Deity. We shall hardly match the benevolent thoughts with which Jesus credited his Father. His reference to the fall of sparrows and a tally of our hairs, point not to petty bookkeeping but to

the amplitude of the Father's heart. 'Tis the *Father* who keeps, in the Book of Life, the names of our forgotten or unrealized fellow laborers.

We make up our lists on the basis of congeniality often. Into our exclusive sets we admit such as we personally enjoy. One blackball—and without explanation—suffices to shut out an applicant for our esteem. But the larger company of which I am thinking—those fellow laborers whose names are in the Book of Life—is made up on different wise. Not by cut of garment or similarity of creed, nor yet by regularity of ecclesiastical orders, but by possession of one vital essence, is the vast throng assembled. "He that is not against us," said Jesus once, "is on our part." It was not the answer his interrogators expected. They wanted him to draw the line near their door sills. What he did say was so broad, so inclusive, so catholic as to be little short of revolutionary. "He that is not against us is on our part."

I think we might be surprised to find this great principle running through the Bible—which so many devotees have read as a narrow book. Enoch belonged to no sect known to us: he merely walked with God. Noah was an "outsider," so to speak, selected not for his

membership in any special order. Abraham was an importation from a foreign land. Moses was born "in the fold," but his culture was Egyptian. Concerning Job, there is not even an intimation that he was a Jew. So with the Syrophœnician woman, with Cornelius, with the centurion of whom our Lord declared that he had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Slowly we are learning to admit that the good men are not all in the same party; that Hebrews are not all Shylocks; that a very black body may house a very white soul. By and by, we shall extend the franchise of our sympathy as widely as God does his love. We shall have come to believe in *man*.

But this suggestion of unnamed fellow laborers carries with it another fine implication —an express declaration, rather. "Other, *my fellow laborers*." While Darwin was laboriously working out the theory that bears his name, another was patiently seeking the same truth. In a deep sense the two were confederates. With the same quest yeasting in their minds they were brothers. The discovery of Neptune as a planet was made almost simultaneously by Adams and Le Verrier. Neither knew of the search of the other. Each, I suppose, counted himself alone in his effort. But in a universe, one of whose fundamental

laws is sympathy, who shall say how much each helped the other? Round the world reaches an army of physicians and surgeons, chemists and research-men, fighting disease. Sometimes they abuse each other like fish-wives. They are often jealous and insular. Yet is theirs a great fraternity working together for man. Shall professed comrades of Jesus be content with a narrower reach and a smaller passion? Can we not look for signs deeper than liveries? Shall we not keep our catechisms and confessionals in the background? Must we forever ask the *name* of our brother's altar? Dare we not rejoice in whatsoever things are true and lovely and of good report—by whom and wherever done? So shall we be strong in the sense of a great fellowship.

My "fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life," may not *seem* to be such. I may not know their hailing place or destination. They may write their names from right to left (with the Jew) or from top to bottom (with the Chinaman.) The matter of chief concern, however, is the record of service they are leaving. Service of man makes for one brotherhood in blessing. Chesterton turning his lance in the body of modern materialism; Brahms making melody for the sweetening of

life; Turner painting eternities in his canvases; Hill binding continents with steel rails, together with the humblest disciple and his cup of cold water, are my fellow laborers, whose names, please God, are in the Book of Life.

XXI

THE UNVEILING

Mostly I do not care for autobiography. It is too disingenuous. With all its *saying*, it really *tells* too little. Fénelon, Oscar Wilde, Grant, Blaine, Henry Adams—they seem as ill at ease and unnatural when they sit down to give themselves away to the public, as the ordinary citizen before a camera. And I put aside their studied self-revelations with a feeling of fresh acquaintance with their *contemporaries*, but with a sense of being evaded by the *author*. It is well-nigh impossible for a man to be artless and truthful when he attempts to take the world into his confidence. For real unveilings of the soul, give me, rather, those unintended openings outward, confessions wrung out under the twist of pain or grief, pressed out as the attar of roses. For example, "that poor boy Keats," brilliant but broken on the wheel, inditing the inscription for his tombstone. Not in a thousand pages could he have so laid bare his soul as when he asked for his obituary, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Or Voltaire, in his cynical

admission concerning religion. Or Chesterfield describing himself as behind the gaudy scenes watching the coarse pulleys that compass the stage effects of life. Or Grover Cleveland crying wistfully, as the tide went out, "I have tried so hard to do right." Or Paul silhouetting himself naïvely against the background of the ages; "The time of my unmooring is at hand." Ah, *then* we become deeply acquainted. In such swift, frank half-unconscious flashes we have men as they were pleased or ashamed to grade and to remember themselves. Thus with earth's Best Man, in his matchless prayer, on the night of his betrayal. Could we eavesdrop at men's secret prayers, we might grade them more accurately. Few can vaunt themselves when they talk alone with their Maker. There veils are withdrawn and the soul stands naked, whether in pride or shame. Neither the vainglory of boasting nor the twin vanity of self-abasement is possible in the cloister of audience with God. And in confessional as utterly intimate as that, Jesus said: "I have manifested thy name." Always we have wanted to know what his contemporaries thought of him—men whom he trained and men whom he antagonized—Peter and Pilate, John and Judas, the woman who broke over him her spikenard box and the

soldiers who drove the nails. And the impression he has made upon representative men since—we should like to know all this. But, as Doctor Denney suggests, it is still more important to learn how Jesus viewed himself.

> "Oh, we're sunk enough, God knows,
> But not quite so sunk that moments,
> Sure, though seldom, are denied us,
> When the spirits' true endowments
> Stand out clearly from its false ones."

At the heart of such self-examination, with a cross in making for the morrow, Jesus says of himself, "I have manifested thy name." Gentleness; gianthood, mercy of hand and majesty of spirit, passionate anger and passionate love—even unto death for full proof of it—these constitute a manifestation of the ineffable name.

Everybody manifests *some* name. Wittingly or not, we all are doing that; cannot avoid it, try as we may. Whether in splendor or squalor we unveil some master of life.

"What is your name?" asked Alexander, once, of a soldier who bore himself unworthily.

"Alexander, Sire," came the reply.

"Then you must change your name or change your conduct," thundered the king.

He could not brook that the letters of his

cognomen should be associated with cowardice. Even his line-soldiers must be worthy manifestors of his imperial name. Not many years ago, in England, there laid down his palette a foremost modern painter. By adoption he was British; by craft he was cosmopolitan. Yet by blood and temperament he was essentially Dutch. He never outgrew his ancestry. Though he lost the accent of Holland, yet remained he a Hollander. Clear down to the close of his days Alma Tadema failed not to manifest the name of the Low Country.

Newspaper reports of a marine disaster say that, when the vessel struck, a group of passengers were playing poker. Spite of confusion around, these "good sports" went on with their game. Click of ivory strove eerily with sound of panic. On they played, till, the game being finished and winnings adjusted, the participants swashed their way across the flooded decks to safety. In the opinion of the reporter they were living up—or down—to their name of gamblers, even when life was the stake. Occasionally, you will hear it said that a certain merchant or attorney is "all business." No use to break past his office door with cry of famine or sentiment. The whole tradition of the market heads up in such a man. He is

the voice of trade or the forum. He manifests to the world the name of Commerce. So that, knowing him, we understand what business is like.

Every day, whether on duty or off, we are revealing some sort of name. As Emerson phrased it: "What you *are* speaks so loud I can't hear what you *say*." The name we make known is a trumpet. Day was when children were named for an ideal, a hope or a memory. Thus "Adam" signifies "from the ground," as reminder of his origin. And "Isaac" memorializes the "laughter" of Sarah when her child of promise was born. Jacob was named so because, at birth, he "laid hold of the heel" of his twin. "Moses" means "from the rushes" out of which Pharaoh's daughter rescued him. And Mary's Son was called Jesus because, as the naming Voice said, "He shall save his people from their sins." But that significant old custom is past. Nowadays, frequently, parents select the most picturesque or musical combinations of letters, with plenty of consonants, if you please. Hence the children have nothing to live up to, nothing to outgrow so far as their names are concerned.

Always, however, there are names of mothers and preceptors, prophets and friends for us to manifest. It is said of the pupils of a

certain teacher of voice that each of them reveals both the excellencies and the limitations of his instructor. The entire Barbizon school of painters bears the marks of their master. Someone declares that Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, laid his imprint upon an entire generation of Englishmen. And the choicest compliment ever paid a certain group of Galilæans was to have said that others "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." What a pity, then, to manifest any but the highest name!

Down South they say tartly that "one drop of Negro blood makes a 'nigger.'" Socially, the sneer is valid because we name a mulatto by that which is considered his lowest origin. Similarly, many a Caucasian is handicapped from birth by some flaw in his title, some accident of birth or consanguinity. It was enough, for some of his contemporaries, that the "gentle Elia" was born in servants quarters, and that Jesus came out of Nazareth. But, one day, that Man said to an unstable friend, "Thou *art* Simon, son of Jona; thou *shalt* be called Peter—a rock." In other words Jesus named the man for the highest in him and then challenged him to live up to his name.

'Tis a beautiful cult, and its ranks are by no means full. Name a man at his best, and you

have set him an archangel's task. The surest way to *get* good out of anybody is to *expect* it out of him. Even a dog. Give a dog a bad name and you have cut the nerve of his enterprise to be a good dog. Any normal human is morally committed to strike twelve when you set his hands at noon.

> "If there be a devil in man
> There is an angel too."

And we have as much right to name him for the *angel* as for the *devil* in him. As much right—and diviner warrant. For, according to Jesus, the best in men is the deepest, realest part of them. Judas was not all treachery. Nero was not all cruelty. Napoleon was not all ambition. Valjean was not all thief. Sidney Carton was not all rascal. Jerry McCauley was not all river-rat. Some of these heard their "new names" and won through. But some, hearing doubtless, did not understand.

"*Thy* Name," said Jesus, meaning by "name" all that the Hebrew put into that word. "I have manifested *thy* name." In *The Street Called Straight*, a father who had grievously violated his trust, waked with a moan to his crime, and dropped upon his knees. It was an incoherent sort of petition. He did not

even know by what name to address God, hence he appealed to a professor for direction. But, on the last page of the book, you see the broken man, out under the open sky, after his deliverance, asking shyly, incredulously, "Was it God?" Christianity gives the answer. In the soul's aphasia Jesus supplies the elusive, missing word. He manifests the Name that stands for pardon and peace. In his earthly life he unveiled the Father. He showed what God is. And our supreme honor is the same as his—to make manifest the Father's Name in a home, at a desk, everywhere we are called to go.

XXII

THE BOOK

The Bible is a much bigger volume than most readers of it realize. By which I do not refer to its size as a printer's product. Measured in ordinary book-terms, it might be a tenth as large as now, yet if we used that fraction wisely, we might gather from the diminished volume more than we commonly find in the whole as now given us. Many a student of the Book goes to it, when he goes at all, for wrong things; things in which the Bible can claim no specialty. Rules and curios, I mean: fulminations, pungent turns of a phrase, vignettes of character; small things, inadequate things, things irrelevant to the needs of the soul. As one might enter a modern bank, admire its appointments, count its tellers, applaud its assets, yet never open an account or test its resources. As visitors pass through the aisles of a greenhouse starred with lustrous blooms and heavy with a hundred odors, and bring away naught more significant than a descriptive tag or a chip to whittle. Just as multitudes move through life, picking

up its slights, nagged by its problems, soured by its sorrows—nor thrill with the sheer wonder of it, or catch the strong rhythm of its increasing purpose. Sometimes, I fear that the Bible is the least appreciated and most misused Volume in bookdom.

Much has been made of the fact that the author of a recent play found both his inspiration and theme between the covers of the Bible. One may accept the compliment and still not wax too enthusiastic over it. There are sermons in almanacs, timetables, catalogues—if only one looks with the dramatist's eye. From the Bible Edwin Arnold got his *Light of the World*, and Lew Wallace his *Ben Hur* and Sienkiewicz his *Quo Vadis*. To the Bible have turned Hall Caine, Corelli, Hutchinson, even Wells, together with a long list of authors of less importance. But to con the pages of Holy Writ for a plot, a lambent phrase, a vivid portrayal, is not at all the same as sending one's soul to the Book. Of course the Bible is literature, and of surpassing value as such. No education that omits acquaintance with Job, Isaiah, the evangelists and Saint Paul can be called liberal. None can read other great literature to best advantage except as familiar with biblical story and idiom which have seeped through into the fabrics of all kinds

of authors. One might profitably spend a year tracing out the indebtedness of Shakespeare to the Bible. I call to mind a cultured man of the world, not in any sense a churchman, who was studying, in monograph form, purely as literature, the most vital books of the Bible. The day he told me about it, he flashed at me, from his overcoat pocket, a copy of Isaiah pointed with critical and exegetical notes. Yet I doubt if he thought once of the Bible as a book to *live by*, a "man of our counsel," a "light to our feet," but, rather, as a source of entertainment and intellectual satisfaction. And whoso studies the Bible primarily for such purpose, misses its genius as absurdly as one who admires a telephone for the finish on the receiver or the cleverness of the invention rather than for the reach it gives him or the voices it brings near.

What's in the Bible, then, for folks with bread to earn, sorrows to bear, perils to meet and souls to make? What would Sir Walter or anybody else *get* if someone gave him "The Book"? Not to disparage other volumes through whose page breaks the same Light that never was on land or sea, how is this one preeminent, unique? First, say, because it is a Book of Lives interpreted with a single purpose. All histories, all biographies, all

novels and many other varieties of literature deal with human life in its reach, its degradation, its glory and its shame. But here you have history told with unique emphasis, and biography set in religious frame, and stories fashioned not for entertainment but for moral grip. As you read you feel the pulse and hear the quickened breath of the writer. Here are realism and idealism conjoined in the same literary fabric, and the whole shot through with mystic light as when a candle is put behind the alabaster columns of Saint Mark's, in Venice. Not Zola nor Ibsen nor any of their degenerate brood ever handled human frailty with greater frankness; not the mid-Victorians with finer iridescence of romanticism. You never feel that salacity is dragged in for the sake of it, nor redeeming beauty kept out, or even exaggerated. Here are men at their lowest, but always needing to fight back the Good Spirit that calls upward forever; and men at their crest always in peril of falling. Where will you find anything finer than the story of Joseph, or the idyl of Ruth, or the lilt of David, or the parable of the lost boy? Where else such naked majesty as Isaiah's or such riot of color as the Apocalypse? It is life as God sees it, and dreams it, and works forever to make it. It is sight of the clay,

and the wheel, and the Potter. Yes, here you see the Potter as nowhere else so visible, so apprehensible.

Again the Bible is a book of Inescapable and Incorrigible Ideals, yet none of them irrational. Mohammed had ideals, of course, many of them missed by his devotees. There are shining glimpses of the heights in Gibbon, in Victor Hugo, in Dante and Thackeray. But in no other volume than the Bible is the ideal so pervasive, so insistent, so haunting when not imperative. Neither Cain in his violence, nor Saul in his bloating pride, nor Judas in his remorse gets clear of what he should and might have been. Over the shoulder of every transgressor as well as saint flashes a ray from the land of transfiguring dreams. Below the levels of man's best the Bible never descends. It permits none to "lie down in sin" comfortably. It forever "disturbs with the joy of elevated thoughts." Perfection is its perpetual challenge—no less. No glossing over with rhetoric, no compounding of felonies against the soul.

And all this because it is, as Eldredge calls it, a Book of The Presence. Heavenly steps are heard throughout it. Upward voices call down its long corridors. He who walked in the first garden "in the cool of the evening,"

seeking a guilty pair, that, through discipline, he might redeem them, moves in every lane, on every highway, through every cottage and every palace as well as temple of the Book. As the first murderer admitted, God is inescapable. None ever gets out of his sight or beyond reach of his arm. "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" cried David in a sort of happy desperation. Alas!—and God be thanked—there is no way *out:* only a way of escape *into* God. And lest any should mistake the divine motive of such encompassing, came Jesus, of whom it is recorded that "he could not be hid." But that was not because he came to play Sherlock Holmes, but Redeemer. Because men need God in their sins, in their travails, in their penitences; because they need forgiveness, consolation, rebirth and rebuilding, he showed us what God is like. "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father," he said and lived. And because no other volume glows and pulses with such revelation, in sweep and majesty, we may well plead, "Give me The Book."

XXIII

IN BABYLON

Not long ago my offices were claimed by a small lassie at her arithmetic problem. Fortunately for my reputation, the problem appeared in the early part of the book. I never was strong on mathematics, and years have not witnessed any sudden blossoming of such talent. The particular trouble of my whilom pupil was "cancellation." I was equal to *that*, having had to practice it in many ways not exemplified in the book. And while we worked, she and I, there was chance for me to ponder. "Cancellation," indeed. Soon or late everybody has to learn the use of it—in terms of life; as when distrust cancels out peace, and pain seems to shut away the stars. Soon or late everybody *must* learn it, for only by the most vigorous eliminations can he solve the problems of his better self. Soon or late too everybody is in peril of learning to cancel factors that must be *left in*, if life is to come to its coronation. For example, frustration need not spell defeat. Pain is by no means the

negation of a good God. And physical exile must never kill the heart's deepest song.

So a band of homesick folk discovered, in Babylon, long ago. At least, I hope they discovered it. Their disconsolateness has passed, as a proverb, into history. Harps on willows, song stifled, by the rivers of Babylon sat they down waiting for the end. By an almost unmeasurable remove seemed they separate from all that the heart holds dear, especially from the visible dwelling of God on Mount Moriah. Then, across their gloom, the God of all lands and deeps dropped into their sky this radiant pledge: "Although I have scattered them, . . . yet will I be to them *as a little sanctuary* [italics mine] in the countries where they shall come." Ah, lassie, lassie, with thy problem in cancellation, I pray that neither loneliness nor sorrow may seem to cancel God out of thy life!

Specifically this is a word for Babylon, not for Jerusalem. Safe and content in Jerusalem, none can understand the wonder of such a pledge. Only when harps hang untouched and exiles droop beside foreign rivers can this tender covenant become operative. But who, for himself, can predict when that day of separation may befall? One does not need to travel far to catch up with loneliness. Some-

times the distance from kitchen to parlor or from the front door to the gate is as great as the space between Jerusalem and Babylon. Some day, if not yet, you will have journeyed out of sight of loved faces, beyond reach of dear voices, away from the call of familiar church bell. Some day, if not now, you will be missing the God who unveils himself in certain human faces, and speaks in dear accent of mother and friend, and shines in the dim silence of the home altar. Then, if not now, you will be able to understand this beautiful word of Ezekiel. So I repeat it now; in order that, when you have reached the pass at which you need it, you may recall it and be glad. "Although I have scattered them, . . . yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary."

A little sanctuary in Babylon in place of the big one on Moriah, at home—Ezekiel was thinking of that gracious compensation. I do not suppose that he imagined that anybody would *choose* the lesser as substitute. Who, in his right senses, would? But that's not the point. The point is that when a lover of the great shrine on the hill overlooking Jerusalem is moved beyond sight and sound of it God will soon make himself known—in a "little sanctuary." Man puts up the building; God makes it a sanctuary. How poignantly do I

recall our first breakfast together after my mother died. Yes, you must always come down to breakfast, the morning after. Life always must go on when it seems to have stopped. And as we three that were left drew up our chairs in their wonted places, and my father bowed his head for the usual blessing, his head fell forward into his hands. Home was not home any more. Mechanics had built the house; the trustees gave us the use of it; but mother made it a home. And in one swift, racking instant, with the familiar dishes on the table and the familiar pictures on the wall, and one precious presence missing, we realized that the place was not home anymore. So God makes the sanctuary. He makes it of that which, apart from him, were nothing better than a specimen of architecture and craftsmanship—just as he can make sanctuaries of great moments and experiences of life.

But, alas! if this were all—that God can entemple himself in life's supreme joys, as his glory once filled the temple on Moriah! Life means Babylon too, and unfamiliar streets, and foreign voices, and a vast homesickness of the soul. Soon or late, sometimes as penalty for forgetting him, God scatters us in countries alien to the heart. What to do then—in

Babylon? Why this: claim the "little sanctuary," as pledged. Put this promissory note in the bank of faith and watch God pay. "Although I have scattered them, . . . *yet* [italics mine] will I be to them as a little sanctuary."

For example, there's the Babylon of the home. I do not think home *ought* to be Babylon. But there are so many dusty ways and slavish days, and the Shekinah so far away. I think of such things often as I look into shining faces at marriage altars. It is Jerusalem now. One can hear the anthem in the great Temple on the hill. By and by it will be Babylon. And I wonder how the now ecstatic pair will like their Babylon. I wonder how they will get on together in Babylon, with bread to earn, and dishes to wash three times a day, and children who fret and cry. All divorces are applied for in Babylon. So far from the shrine of courtship to the noisy streets of domestic routine and exaction. And unless one can find the "little sanctuary" in the commonplace day of exile from the land of love's dream, tragedy impends. To walk with God in white in Babylonian bondage is a far more notable achievement than to keep sight of him in Jerusalem.

Then there's the Babylon of business. What

a babel of voices! What a welter of bargain and sale! What a stifling air of chicane! From church to counter is, for most men, further, as the crow flies, than from Jerusalem to Babylon. By and by even the outlines of the great sanctuary grow dim and its music dies in the soul. 'Tis so far from home! Yet you do not suppose God wants men to resign from business because business is Babylon. He will not be complimented to have you quit Babylon in order to save your soul alive. He needs to have you save it where you are, mid the moil and stress of trade. Does anybody suppose that God's concern is exhausted in sale of hymnals and conduct of prayer meetings? What of the little sanctuary he promises to be in the land to which you have come for the earning of a livelihood? Oh, the wonder and transfiguration of the shrine by the roadside in Babylon!

Then, sometimes, Babylon stands for sickness, for weary days and interminable nights. To keep sight of the great sanctuary when one is sick is very difficult. Ill health gives one a sense of exile. The threshold of a sickroom is a thousand miles broad. "Do you know where I would go if I could get out of here?" moaned Heine, the invalid. "I would go straight to the church of my fathers."

But suppose Heine *cannot* get out. Suppose he *never* gets out. Then there is chance for God to be "as a little sanctuary" in the chilly garret where Heine lies. God can do it. I have seen him do it. He does it times without number; thrilling even a death-chamber with memories, and peopling it with shining presences. Of course you want to be well. You ought to fight for it, if need be. But, meantime, there's the pledge of the little sanctuary.

In Babylon. To me it seems a diviner achievement for God to build a little sanctuary in Babylon than a temple on Moriah. Men always have expected to meet God in exalted places. But the hard pavements of Babylon? Jesus came to show what his Father and ours can do there. He was forever finding people where they looked not for him—Peter by the nets, Nathanael under the fig tree, Mary in the garden. And he made the lanes and market places different, for aye, by becoming "as a little sanctuary" everywhere that his feet were set. And so I like to think of God as God of the wayside shrine as truly as of the templed splendor on the hill.

XXIV

PERILOUS ASSUMPTIONS

Most of us who are old enough to have voted for Roosevelt met "David Harum" in the book by that name. Indeed, we feel better acquainted with the latter than with his eminent contemporary just named. He revealed, in their essence, so many of our traits he might have been a member of our immediate family. He set us laughing at him; uncomfortably perhaps, as laughing at ourselves. His Sunday horse trade, for example—nobody forgets that: his quizzical compounding of a felony against his own conscience. Tradition and community ethics would not permit him to consummate, on the Lord's Day, an actual bargain. Hence he merely "supposed" what might happen on some other day in the week. And if, thus, the deal was practically made, so much the better.

All of which is quite delicious—in a book. Most of us conduct a lively business in the realm of "make-believe." We are constantly assuming things and situations otherwise

incredible or uncomplimentary to ourselves; or imaging dénouements altogether discreditable to others. Despite our vaunted sanities and shrewdness, we are absurdly poor guessers, poor interpreters and prophets. We borrow a deal of trouble at no advantage to anybody. We encourage states of mind that unman us. We play with fire that scorches the soul if not the flesh. We picture ourselves where we ought not to be, in reality; or as victims of misfortune not in the least impending. In short, we "suppose" a host of things that are not even good suppositions.

"Supposing." With the word as guide, we might enjoy a ramble through literature. Instead, however, I suggest a brief excursion into the New Testament. For instance, the homeward journey of the mother of Jesus. Missing the Boy from her side, Mary "supposed" him to be somewhere else in the caravan. As suppositions go, this one was normal enough, even if not creditable to a mother-heart. Mothers are constantly reassuring themselves thus concerning their children. Truth to tell, a mother is often the last to be aware of the drift or danger of her child. Sometimes, I suppose, her confidence measures the love with which she has dowered him. She will not admit evil in the object of so many

prayers and vigils. Or, on the other hand, she cannot hear the majestic voices calling him—as Calvin and Cromwell and Lincoln. While she still "supposes him to be in the company," he has traveled far toward the supernal light or the outer darkness. Then, with a start, she rouses to the admission that she has lost him.

In all such matters, as in a hundred others, we take for granted too confoundedly much. We subsume continued health and radiant mornings for our hearts, friendships unchallenged and crops that fail not. We permit life's choicest possessions to go unguarded, and let the sentries of the soul sleep at their posts. "I will go out and shake myself, as at other times," vaunted the shorn Samson, who "wist not that the Lord was departed from him." At the height of Belshazzar's feast an unbribable hand wrote doom on the banquet-room wall. "It is too late, sire," replied the commander when the infatuate Louis XVI finally gave the order for his troops to open fire upon the mob. "Can't you see that the soldiers are already exchanging weapons with the populace?"

> "Had I but served my God with half the zeal
> I served my King, he would not in mine age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies,"

lamented Wolsey as he realized that his sun had set. In his latter years, Darwin confessed that he had lost his earlier love for poetry and music. Thus, by almost imperceptible retrograde, Hugh Pentecost reached the point of scoffing at the evangel he once had proclaimed with pride.

Everywhere the finer a human possession is the more precarious our hold upon it. Roast beef, real estate, and money in the bank are relatively stable assets, but rainbows, friendships, fealty to the ideal, the sense of God, must be watched, lest, unwitting, we lose them. Particularly the last named—the sense of God. In the instance cited it was *Jesus* whom they lost by "supposing." He still was in the company. He whom we might have thought they would miss *first* was left to be accounted for in pain and feverish quest. And this is the spiritual tragedy to which our hurried, materially preoccupied age is bringing so many. It is not that we are deliberately irreligious, still less that we are atheistic; simply that, as in the parable of a recreant king, "while we were busy here and there" the Presence which it meant life for us to guard "was gone."

But "suppose" again, with the jailer of Paul and Silas, at Philippi. If the mother and

friends of the boy Jesus gave too much place to easy confidence in their "supposition" concerning his whereabouts, the Philippian jailer yielded too much ground to fear. Strange happenings had befallen his bailiwick that night. Earthquake had shaken the walls and unearthly light had broken the darkness. Doors had been flung wide, as when the infamous Bastile was opened. And the jailer, "supposing" his prisoners had escaped, was about to anticipate, with suicidal hand, the penalty he might expect for his apparent carelessness. But for the reassuring word of Paul, "We are all here. Do thyself no harm," a life had been flung away gratuituously that night. "I am never disappointed," declared my friend, as if he had hit upon life's ultimate philosophy; "for, the worst that can happen to me is never worse than my expectations. Hence I am never disappointed." Nor is he the only member of such Lodge of Foreboding. Beneath the crust of apparent optimism runs often a deep, dark, cold current of distrust. Multitudes who boast of needing no credits at the *bank* for the conduct of their business are immense borrowers of trouble, to the advantage of nobody. To the infinite detriment of the passing days, they constantly discount calamities ahead. In reality they

suffer each fresh misfortune *twice:* once before the fact, and again when it *becomes* fact. And when, as in the case of the Philippian jailer, the evil stroke falls not, they have undergone it gratuitously.

This is the mood against which Jesus spoke his oft-quoted and usually misinterpreted *caveat,* "Take no thought for the morrow." Shame that anyone ever dared to make our Lord sponsor for a happy-go-lucky temper which disregards both the counsels of the past and the grim logic of events. Jesus is the sanest apostle of wise preparedness. Take his parables of the wise builder, the foolish virgins, the talents, not to mention others. Most of them gather point from the extemporaneousness of the average man. On the other hand, none so careful as Christ to save the passing days inviolate from the corrosion of worry. With the shadow of a cross always athwart his path, he preached and practiced joy. No disciple of his can grow rich or free in the clutch of foreboding. Spite of shock and frustrations, fears and tears, life is usually kind—at least, kinder than our gloomy forecasts of it. "Do thyself no harm," then, by dread of to-morrow's task or travail. In honor of Him who spangles life with privilege, ours to "seize the day."

One classic instance further. This time it was Mary whose "supposition" so mournfully fell wide of the fact. 'Twas Easter, and "while it was yet dark," she came, with spices, to anoint a dead Friend. That was the most she dared hope—to touch the dear body of a dead Friend. And when a Voice that once had waked the dead in Mary's heart, with haunting melody asked whom she sought in the garden thus early, she, "supposing him to be the gardener," besought to know where he had borne the object of her visit. For shame, Mary, to forget that truth is often stranger than fiction! For shame, we, that our faithless hearts so often deny the glad testimony of our eyes! In a world that has God for king, nothing is too good to be true. The richer an experience is, the more likely it is to be true. Everywhere—in science, in nature, in love—the incredible is forever happening. That marvel of the Easter Garden is crowning instance of what our hearts have right to expect. Had Jesus permitted Mary to follow out her bleak "supposition," she would have quitted the Garden a sadder woman than she came. God give us the courage to agree with Browning in his tonic confession: "I say, faith is my waking life."

XXV

AN OLD ROOT-VIRTUE

According to Wordsworth, "the primal duties shine aloft, like stars." Doubtless the same might be affirmed of the primal virtues. Unfortunately, they are not altogether easy to name. At least it would be difficult to secure world-wide agreement as to which the primal virtues are. Those in universal request and honor are rather alarmingly few. East and West are almost as likely to meet geographically as in ethics. What we Occidentals consider moral strength the Jap calls weakness, and the sanctity for which a Hindu would go to the stake, to us might seem unworthy of hazard. Honesty, truthfulness, purity, and temperance change definitions almost as often as one trans-ships on a journey around the world. Had a certain scrap of paper meant the same thing to the various governments of western Europe, there would have been no Great War. Sometimes I wonder if there is a single virtue that can be called universal. If so, I think it is courage. So far as I am able to judge, everybody, everywhere,

to hold the upward path, whether it leads to glory or to the grave; to take the part of the under dog even after the neighbors have blackened his name—these are valorous askings. They are the askings of an age at bottom heroic. And they can be met only by the stanchest type of courage.

Moreover, courage, at its highest, is a sort of root-virtue. It holds, as in a sheath, most of the other virtues. Patience is but another name for courage—the courage of holding on. Conviction is a flabby thing apart from courage; one needs the *courage* of his convictions. Even self-sacrifice is less than beautiful when the martyr lies down to it; he must stand up to it and claim it, as our Lord claimed his cross. Of the three crosses on Golgotha two held *victims;* the central cross held a *Conqueror* because of the courage of his love. Without courage no man can do his day's best work or champion a high cause or live a white life. Said Edison: "Genius is two per cent inspiration and ninety-eight per cent perspiration" —a synonym for courage. When an English alchemist offered to sell him the secret of art, Rubens pointed to the canvases around him: "You have come twenty years too late. As long ago as that, with the aid of this palette and these brushes, I discovered the philoso-

pher's stone." Courage, again. None toils like that except in the temper of Balaklava, Verdun, and Valley Forge. Approached by perfidious overtures from Spain, William of Orange cried back into the teeth of his tempters: "Not for wife, nor children, nor lands, nor life would I mix in my cup one drop of the poison of treason." Again courage—of the soul. Or hear Carlyle, in his hoarse, pungent fashion: "I *will* live a white life; I will live a white life if I go to hell for it." Still, courage!

All real courage is of the soul. The man who goes palest in the presence of physical peril may be most heroic in spirit, and the woman who flinches in a dentist's chair would die unwhimpering for her child.

"I believe you are afraid," sneered a lad at his comrade, as they stood at the edge of a cliff.

"Yes," said the timid one, in whose face was set the signal of distress; "yes, I am afraid. And if you were half as scared as I am you would go home."

Bravery may be a matter of uniform, as the French word *brâve* implies. It means smart-looking, upstanding physically. Whereas, courage means "of the heart." Lincoln never looked down a rifle barrel. The shot that struck him down whistled from behind. Yet,

measured by the anguish he endured and the loneliness of his ideals, his is the most heroic figure of White House annals. Against threats of foes and prudent counsels of friends he held himself, unflinching, to his task. I never heard a sermon or read a book on the courage of Jesus. But where will you match him? Take him unaware, in storm on the lake, facing Herod or Pilate or the mob, in the cruel hands of the soldiers. Not a craven look or word. His gentleness, his patience, his pity were keyed to courage. And his death? Even Rousseau admitted that if the death of Socrates was the death of a hero, Jesus died like a God.

The heroic Christ! I hesitate to analyze him, as a lover of flowers is slow to count the petals on a rose. But Jesus' courage was the courage of *faith.* None can be deeply heroic unless there is back of him an adequate cause. When the quixotic John Brown was asked why other regiments flinched in the presence of his men, he replied, "I suppose because they lacked a cause." Jesus believed in men, in his mission to them, in his Father, and in the Father's House at the end of the road. Others doubted, yet he held his shining path of faith. His courage was that of a man who *believed* more than any other.

And *hope?* His was the courage of undaunted hope. While the murdering stones rained upon the saintly Stephen heaven seemed open. Because of such open heaven Stephen found no difficulty in being valorous. One never quite fears the pelting stones when the welcoming heavens are open. With our Lord heaven was open always. Out of the plenitude of his own vast hopefulness he ministered hope to men. "Our backs are against the wall," confessed Haig when Germany seemed to be winning. That is the courage of *desperation.* The courage of *hope* is more.

And *love?* Courage at its zenith is the courage of love. Nothing else works such heroism. Have you loved so well that you have felt the tiger in you roused to protect? Have you watched a woman's face when her child was in danger? I do not think that one can be quite heroic unless he supremely loves. But to love as Jesus loved accounts a man "worthy to stand before the Son of man," in courage.

XXVI

ATTUNED

"Give me the man who sings at his work," observed Carlyle. It does not follow that the rather querulous Scot wished to be present at the performance. Distance lends enchantment in many such matters. Besides, Carlyle had no ear for music. For my part, I would rather *watch* than *hear* some folks sing. If you please, I'll take their musical proclivities for granted. Nevertheless, we were built for song, as truly as thrushes and nightingales are. And to lose one's song, as did the circuit-rider in Corra Harris' delightful volume, may be more tragic than the death of a friend. According to an anonymous bit of advice, whoso is unhappy at his task ought to change it at the earliest possible moment. Following which counsel, some people would scarcely stick to one job for as long as twenty-four hours. They are worse than an old saint who, being asked if she enjoyed her religion, replied that she never enjoyed anything when the wind is east. East wind or west, some malcontents find no pleasure under the sun. Granted that

the ailment is with themselves rather than with their work in the world, at least they cannot seem to sing at it. And somewhat always is radically wrong when we cannot thus sing—however unmelodiously. Throughout my boyhood days there was in our home a domestic who usually crooned to herself over the kitchen chores. I never was able to identify the tune. It might have been the long-meter doxology confused with a popular song-hit. Often, as a lad, I wished she would complete the effort. Meanwhile I learned that when she sang her biscuits were likely to be light and my pilfering visits to the pantry not unwelcome. Whereas when her song died on her lips, it was wise for me to confine my excursions to other parts of the house.

No, I should not recommend anyone to run away from his task because he cannot sing at it. Rather, let him try to win back the song. "Grin and bear it"—or, as a wag adds to the familiar prescription, "you don't need to *grin*." Once when Carlyle was hard at it on one of his famous volumes, his wife wrote to a friend: "We are now in the valley of the shadow of Frederick the Great." I am glad Carlyle stuck at his task, even though he could not seem to be songful about it. But I wish he might have been joyous too. Con-

cerning Stevenson, on the other hand, I have heard said that his cheerfulness was forced and artificial—like the whistling a boy does in a graveyard. Even so, if I need to be in the neighborhood of a cemetery at night, I am glad to have somebody whistling there. Stevenson sang all around the world while he was questing health. God knows how many times he sang himself up from a sick-bed. He considered it a shame to move among his race and show no glorious morning face. He sang himself clear down into the mists of the valley, and his minstrelsy is vocal to-day.

There is no record of Jesus singing—save a hymn on the betrayal night. His biographers evidently were more impressed with his prayers and tears than with any gift of songfulness he may have had. They sketched him as "The Man of Sorrows." Yet, from the wedding feast at Cana, from the scene with children in his arms, from the Bethany home, lingers the image of a Man of Smiles. Lacking a tuneful spirit, he never could have been welcome guest in so many homes. He talked insistently about his joy. And despite his burdens, his griefs, his agony for others, I think of him as earth's most radiant-faced Man whose advent made the glory of any home. Earth needed his song as part of the redemption he came to

accomplish. And, by the same token, it needs good cheer from us. The Kingdom will be ushered in with melody of hearts. Medical men talk learnedly about diseases infectious and diseases contagious. A real heart-song is both. Few are immune to the contagio-infection of songfulness. "Laugh and the world laughs with you." Of course. The world cannot quite help laughing with you even though it fails to know what precisely you are laughing at. Someone describes a country lad as passing down a village street whistling a familiar air. As he went tunefully by the smithy's the man at the forge caught up the melody and beat out its measures on his anvil. A housewife, drudging at her toil, heard the lad and half unconsciously hummed his tune with him. And an invalid in an upper room turned wan face toward the street and smiled. Thus, a heedless, happy boy did more for his village that day than if he had reduced the price of eggs five cents a dozen.

Browning gives us the same lesson in his "Pippa Passes." Beneath the windows of people strange to her she sang her artless bit. And a man meditating a great crime felt a strange softness steal back into his heart. And a woman who knew the crush of a world's unpitying heel grew penitent and forgiving

too. Far as the song of the little minstrel went with its reassuring message, music stirred in other lives. What is finer than that? To put actual songs into the mouths of people, or melody back into spirits weary, defeated and sad, is a paramount ministry of the God who sits in heaven. Doubtless our fellows need many things from us. They need a good day's work for a fair day's pay. They need courage, honesty, and truth. Also, and right urgently, need they to be helped to sing.

According to the narrative, the birth of Mary's Son was celebrated with a burst of sky-song. And he, thus caroled, spent three crowded years teaching his friends songfulness of life; and, what is better, showing how to recover song to those who had forgotten their birthright of joy. Christian hymnology represents but a small fraction of the melodies which Jesus brought to folks. In a familiar psalm, one of the most sympathetic and tuneful of singers refers to a certain song as "new"—"He hath put a *new* song in my mouth." Perhaps it was new in the sense that the psalmist had not known it before. Perhaps it was new in the sense that he never had sung it in the same way and with the same meaning before. Nothing is newer than an old, dear, familiar song relearned, as we

relearned "Ben Bolt" and "Annie Laurie." Any who heard her will recall the thrill which swept the audience when Jenny Lind, at Castle Garden, brought back a time-worn aria. Let a fine orchestra turn from classic rendition and modern lyrics to some melody of the days when our fathers courted our mothers, and you shall find many a moist eye and thumping heart among the auditors.

Not long ago there came to me a joyous letter from a young father. He tried to describe how he waited outside a certain door in the hospital; waited—and waited—interminably, it seemed—until word came that all was well. Then he essayed to tell me the splendor of his new joy. He declared that *his* happiness was even greater than the new mother's. For *he* had got the baby and the mother too. Yes, he had got her back with a new sense of possession. He had been down in the valley of the shadow with her, and had watched her climb back from the valley with a new life in her arms. And the new song that he was trying to sing was the old song of redemption. Jesus avers that there is no other gladness on earth or in heaven like redemption-joy. "More joy," he said, "over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-nine just persons which need no repentance."

If you never have lost anything and gotten it back—health or friend, fortune or love or peace—then you cannot understand this word. But if you have *lost and found*, you know that no other felicity is quite so rapturous.

Isaiah foreglimpses a wonderful day when there shall *return* to Zion a multitude "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." They are the "ransomed." They are coming back. Sometimes we criticize the passionate extravagance of a forgiven transgressor. Why criticize or wonder? Is it because we do not know the ecstasy of a great forgiveness? The newest, most compelling song in the world is the song that God puts back into a heart as the sign and expression of a sweeping forgiveness.

XXVII

THE ASCENDING SCALE

A YEAR or so ago thousands were parroting—or lampooning—the jingle of a little French chemist. Fortunately, the vogue of it has passed, and we await the next mental fantasy. Allowing for certain pragmatic values of such philosophy, especially with neurotics, I am not in favor of anybody's teasing his own soul by iterating cheery untruths about himself. Frankly, I consider it bad morals, under whatever name practiced. To deceive others is bad enough, but to pull the wool over one's own eyes is vastly worse. I've less than no patience at all with such chatter. When a man falls to assuring himself that, in body or estate, in aspiration or efficiency, he is "growing better and better," the iteration needs basis in fact rather than in the gossamer "that dreams are made of." Not, therefore, in the *patois* of Coué, but in the vigorous, forthright fashion of a certain major prophet of the old school, I remind you of his tonic pledge: "I will do better unto you than at your beginnings." Some of the things Ezekiel *said* I

do not pretend to understand. Fortunately, it is not necessary for me to understand them. Assuming that he knew what he meant, I let the matter rest at that. Some of the things that Ezekiel *saw* would, if I saw them, incline me to consider myself a fit subject for a psychopathic clinic. Wheels within wheels, and strange, flying creatures endowed with four faces, and books to be swallowed whole—the more I ponder them the worse confused I become. I take for granted the prophet was sane in his esoteric visions, and I leave the matter so. But when he says, on behalf of God, "I will do better unto you than at your beginnings," at least, we can *understand* it. It is phrased in the dialect of the heart. It rings like a church bell through the murk and tumult of storm. It whispers to our baffled hopes, bidding them try wings again. If Ezekiel really said this, on God's behalf—and the pledge is unannulled—we ought to be able to "greet the unseen with a cheer."

"Better than at your beginnings." 'Tis a pretty big contract, even for God. For the beginnings were crimson and gold-edged and almost infinitely sweet. I might hesitate to invite you to live over, in memory, "your beginnings," lest I leave you too homesick and forlorn. Mother was there—and Santa Claus

with his wonderful pack—and all sorts of things done for you, without your stir—and no precarious livelihood to earn—and no racking problems to solve. Oh, beautiful, sweet days of "beginnings"! What would not some give to be transported back to the shelter and innocence, the unaffected laughter and absorbing happiness of the "beginnings"? Yet here is a promise to "do better unto you than at your beginnings." Is it too good to be true? The other night I spent an hour with a prisoner of disease. And as I entered the room I was furtively admonished to cheer up the patient. Of course. But this "cheering up" business is one of the most teasing tasks in the world, for any sort of captive. There are many kinds of captivity, and all their woes are one. There is the captivity of poverty and the captivity of doubt, the captivity of fear and the captivity of sin. I am writing to a vast brotherhood of prisoners. Nobody perfectly free! Everybody wearing some sort of fetter! Everybody cribbed, cabined, and confined in some respect! If it isn't your business, it's your relatives. If not your relatives, maybe it's your habits. And if not your habits, then your ideals perhaps. Nobody perfectly free! We were talking of Christmas, he and I; he with the vision of a

fresh grave chilling him, and I with my grave or my pain. Suddenly he drew himself together with a start, as if he had revealed too much, adding, wearily, "Life is a problem." Yes, life is, indeed, a problem, and the problem is in its prison experiences.

Well, then, observe that Ezekiel's glowing pledge of "better than at your beginnings," is the word of a captive to captives. Across the centuries it chimes to us from Chaldea where Israel was enslaved. The name of the land of captivity does not matter greatly. It might have been Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon. To-day it may be Germany, Russia, or "free America," as we call it. All captivity of the spirit is essentially one. "Chaplain" McCabe delighted thousands by his lecture on "The Bright Side of Life in Libby Prison." But I doubt if any part of that sunny talk was prepared during prison days. It is much easier to see the "bright side" of captivity after one is out of it. This word of Ezekiel's, however, was for folks in bondage still. And it was more than a promise of deliverance from Chaldea. I suppose that was all the Israelites were asking—just to be sent home. To smell the green meadows of Canaan once more, to see the smoke of the home fires and altars, to spend an hour in the lovely temple on Moriah—

I fancy the captives thought that were enough to ask. In your way it would suffice for you. The happiest year I could wish for you would be a replica of the happiest year you have lived; some precious year of childhood, the year the baby came, the year you made your fortune, or the year you found God. Merely to escape from present bondage and to repeat the dear joys of an earlier day would be enough for your heart. But it is not all that God asks for you, not all that he intends. "I will do *better* (italics mine) unto you than at your beginnings."

"Better and better." Better because more divine than mere release. I do not understand that he pledges to break all fetters. He promises to drop *into* our captivity grace and beauty richer than mere freedom. Paul was not made quit of his thorn; but, in spite of it, he won his greatest victories. Matheson never broke from the prison house of blindness, but, oh, the visions he caught and the good he achieved! Lincoln lost not the ache in his heart, but God gave more than mere compensation; he gave the homage of the ages. A woman recently assured me that *any* saint may be healed of bodily malady for the asking. I do not believe it. I know it is not true. My mother tried *once* to follow the gleam of

that *ignis fatuus*. Just *once*. Then she braced her dear, tender shoulders to the yoke of ill health—and kept on smiling and singing—till the smile froze on her face and her voice went silent one winter afternoon. No, I do not understand God to promise every sort of emancipation for which we may pray. What he pledges is more, and finer, and incomparably sweeter: "I will . . . do better unto you than at your beginnings."

Specify? I hesitate, the theme is so big. For one thing, he gives *friendship*. A child has playmates; a man has friends. And a friend is vastly more than a playmate—though he may be the same individual consecrated at a higher altar. Asked to lay a finger upon the secret of his beautiful life, Kingsley did not say, "I had a *playmate*." He says, "I had a *friend*." Real friendships are oftenest made in captivity. Friendship is one of the better things God gives as life's sun passes the zenith. Well enough to sing:

> "The friends who in our sunshine live,
> When winter comes have flown."

The fault with the familiar lines is that they do not apply. The winter of life helps to *make* as well as to *declare* real friends. Another "better thing" we come to in Chaldea is *appre-*

ciation of home. Often I hear lads and lassies profess keen appreciation of home. And I do not believe them. 'Tis exile that puts into the heart a deep valuation of home. This is one of the pungent pities of life—that we need to forfeit before we truly prize. God must let us be torn from our joys ere we realize the divineness of them. In the far country the prodigal remembered the home in which he had grown restless. Even if he never succeeded in finding his way home, still God had done a better thing for him than at his beginnings. And a *new sense of God.* Israel had lost God before she was carried into Chaldea. Rather, she had never truly *found* him. That was why she had to be torn away. And she found him in *bondage;* by tears and loneliness; found him she had missed within sight and sound of the temple on the hill. In some Chaldea we oftenest make the peerless discovery of life—greater than gravitation, radium, wireless. In some Chaldea of the heart we find God near and wonderful.

XXVIII

HOLDEN EYES

We are an arrogant lot, we mortals. We act as if the universe were set up for our convenience or delectation. It must run for our pleasure or we cry out against it. Every normal individual ought to study astronomy and own a telescope, to the end that he may guess how relatively unimportant he is. One Sunday a distinguished looking man, a friend of mine, walked into church a trifle late—a habit of his. (One attracts more attention by being late than by coming early.) The congregation was already standing for the opening hymn; and, accepting the hymnal passed him, he laid his hat upon the seat behind him. In a moment he had forgotten the incident. Reminder came painfully, with a resounding crack, as he sat down, to his small daughter's stage whisper: "Oh, papa, please do it again; do it again, please." Evidently, she fancied that the disconcerting moment was arranged for her personal entertainment. And I doubt if, in the widening experiences of later years, she has outgrown that *naïve* conviction—that

life's ongoing is (or should be) focused for her especially.

Few of us ever do outgrow such childish notion—except as we reach the blinding conclusion that our welfare and heartaches bulk not at all in the planet's rush. Despite disillusions and bruises, most of us succeed in clinging to the belief that the universe was created for us and acquits itself famously when it makes us happy. Once we claimed the moon for plaything: we still claim it for our idyls. Once we expected the world to stop, if need be, while our porridge was prepared or our cut finger was bandaged. What we expect to-day is not so essentially different. A world that gives us daily bread (with plenty of butter, if you please), and honors our drafts, and prospers our voyages, and blesses our loves is a good world doubtless. For such high purposes we seem to fancy it was built.

"If the rainbow lasted half an hour, nobody would trouble to look at it." What warrant the clever cynicism may have I cannot say. It is much like our telling the good we would do with a million dollars or the office of President. None can disprove the validity of our brave assertions. Thus I do not know what would be our reaction to a rainbow that lasted half an hour. It never lasts so long. Almost

before we can summon our friends to admire the seven-hued wonder its glory has paled. Or it fades as we reverently watch. Perhaps it is better so. Not by their apparent permanence can we appraise the worth of things or experiences. Flowers that hung unfading upon their stems the summer long would scarcely elicit a second glance. Smiles that cannot die into frowns or tears were less beautiful. Health unmenaced by disease, prosperity unthreatened by disaster, friendship unhaunted by fear, and love unstung by parting would lose half their thrill. Fortunate for our souls that earth's most precious possessions are often in jeopardy: else were we less rich than now. So I do not find fault with rainbows that fade. Such is their nature. For a thousand best harvests in life we must glean as we go.

We are so slow to attain to the real uses of our eyes. Some *never* seem to attain. We see dollars, though not always the fearful potency of them, and "the main chance" perhaps, and stone walls that prisons make. But the supernal gleams that flash in prisons, and the vast offerings of life for human helpfulness, and the magic of money to enrich the heart of the owner—from all this our eyes are too frequently holden. I suppose that, now and

again, you have gone over by day some road you had traversed at night. Day taught you how much you had missed by the journey at night. Wild flowers by the wayside, trees in bloom or glorified by frost, tangle of wood and stream, waving harvests, faces ready to smile welcome into your own—how much you had missed! Thus most of us travel through life, seeing naught more than a short reach of road ahead, and sometimes not even that. A world packed with beauty, but few harvesting eyes! A world streaked with the crimson and gold of kindness, yet called grim because of the defects of our vision! A world theophanic, but seen as theatrical only, by Chesterfieldian eyes. As one observed long ago, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Some best part of us dies when we do not deeply *see*.

Especially the significance of things. For centuries men had watched the hulls of ships sink strangely as they moved toward the horizon. For still longer ages men like you and me had seen the sun slip silently behind the western rim of sky only to reappear with perfect punctuality at the opposite rim next morning. You might have thought that they would guess the shape of our planet. But "their eyes were holden" from the significance of what they beheld. Similarly, from time

immemorial men had felt the trade-winds blowing in their faces, blowing ever in the same direction. They had timed their voyages by such breezes. You might think—but no, we are not quite sure, even now. For ages men noticed ivy always twining one way; but if they asked why, no record was kept of their query. When labor first found articulate voice the world smiled, as I did the first time my fox terrier barked. It was such a ridiculous noise. Had he sense enough to realize how foolish it sounded, he might have whined with chagrin. There are people who still affect to smile at the bark of organized labor. Meantime labor is finding its voice, and finding it terrifying to the existing order. Deep, awesome, hollow with the pent miseries and hungers of millions, it is filling earth with threats and pledges. We are beginning to listen and understand, but our understanding has been painfully slow.

The Revelator describes a certain book as "sealed with seven seals." I do not pretend to guess all that he meant. Yet know I perfectly well what a "sealed book" is. There are such on our shelves and study tables. Never have we been able to open them. I mean that we see nothing in them. Our eyes scan the pages while our interest is elsewhere.

We read and are no whit wiser. Then, some day, a great sorrow or a great joy "stabs our spirit wide awake," and we turn back to the same sealed books to find them bursting with meaning. For many, such a volume is the Bible. Men open and find nothing in it. 'Tis a sealed Book, "sealed with seven seals"—until a new experience of God breaks up the shallows of the soul.

So in a multitude of ways we come tardily to the great meanings of life. Like the half-cured blind man, we see "men as trees walking." Recently I noticed on the driver's seat of a car a noble collie. He looked immensely wise and interested. Every time his master shifted gears the dog narrowed his eyes. Yet really he saw nothing significant to him. A plate of scraps or a pat upon the head would have meant more than all the machines and revenues of the automobile industry. Thus for years men glimpse Jesus Christ, admitting "*no* beauty that they should desire him." They find no particular fault *with* him, but, alas! they discover no urgent use *for* him. Like the two men who walked all the way to Emmaus with our Lord on his resurrection day, their eyes are holden. Think of it and ponder—walking with him, hearing his talk, touching his garment, yet not recognizing him

until he laid bread in their hands. I am glad the Record admits that at length "their eyes were opened." But I am sorry the eye-opening took so long. They missed so much that they needed. Just as we miss so much in the same fashion. "Oh, slow of heart to believe!" Slow to admit the lessons that God is trying to teach us on all the ordinary as well as the extraordinary days of life!

XXIX

YET MORE

'Tis a typical child cry, or a man's. Oliver Twist, demanding more porridge, speaks for the race. More money, more time, more honors, more love, more truth, more life—let the list of askings be long enough, and all of us are on it. We are an avaricious lot, we mortals. Concerning an heir's claim to his full share of a certain estate a mutual friend remarked, "He doesn't need it." As if that settled anything. Since when did absence of *need* for a certain possession choke back the demand for it or cool the feet that were hot in its pursuit? In life, as in courtrooms, the weaker the case, the greater noise in prosecution or defense of it. We want what we want when we want it, and only a grudging world denies. And our clamor is not reduced when we carry it up into ranges less material. Still the cry for more—insistent, undiverted; sometimes *naïve* as the repetitious pleading of a baby, sometimes bitter with the gall of disillusion and defeat. Still the teasing demand for "more," as Palissy at his furnace, as

Madame Curie in her laboratory, as John Calvin at Geneva, as Goethe on his deathbed. At the lowest it may be a belated cry for the moon. At the highest it carries the freighted hopes and dreams of a son of the Infinite. For the moment I speak of it in its specious, unworthy aspects.

Take, for example, the haughty demand put up to our Lord by certain critics of his ministry: "By what authority doest thou these things?" Under other circumstances and in a different spirit, the challenge might be warranted. But, even a fair question may be, as the lawyers say, "irrelevant, incompetent, and immaterial." This was not the time for discussion: it was time to admit some plain facts and to act upon the basis of them. Everybody knows the temptation to "spar for wind," as pugilists describe it. I have known a lad to argue for half an hour over the justice or immediacy of a plain, parental command. What he wanted was not "more light" on the subject, but postponement of obedience, with the hope, of course, that the mandate might be modified or withdrawn altogether. Many the warm debate I have waged with my father concerning some part of the domestic decalogue that was as plain as a pikestaff. And I can recall his cryptic smile and the twitch

at the corners of his mouth. He knew as well as I did what I was trying to gain—not further illumination but respite. And the pity is that few outgrow that propensity. While the inauguration of a Parcel Post was being urged in this country it was wittily observed that there were really but four arguments against the step, namely, the four great express companies. During the closing session of the last Congress one member held the floor for about forty hours—the longest speech on record. Nobody cared what he said, not even himself. Any topic was germane to his purpose—to defeat a certain bill. Given endurance and the privilege of the floor he could talk to death the proposed legislation. As concerning the establishment of a World Court there are, doubtless, honest differences of opinion, but also there are political fortunes to be conserved and political fences to be built. And when it comes to argument, one can argue down almost anything except tides and sunrise.

Sometimes God stands out against our personal cruelty, our silent disobedience or open defiance. With all his Fatherhood he cries down our transgression. An old grudge, perhaps, a base deceit, a piece of unfilial conduct—for yourself you will recognize what I

mean. For years you have not spoken to an old friend. For a decade you have plotted to get even with an old enemy. With elaborate show of righteousness you have held your ground in a matter of personal dignity. Nay, you have clung to evils that must not be named in broad day. And you know perfectly well what God would say. Being good, there is but one thing he *could* say. And when, in some unguarded moment, he breaks past the barriers and tells you what duty is—well, then you crave a little time to think the matter over. More than once I have led a friend up to Jesus Christ. The signs were right for prompt allegiance. And while I waited for the great arrival, holding my breath almost, he began to debate the issue. At the very threshold of obedience he paused to discuss it, and I knew that the day was lost.

But there are other applications of my theme. There's the plea put up to Jesus by certain tentative disciples: "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." As if the Lord of life and glory could put into a sentence or two his claim for discipleship! Very few of the eminent realities can be reduced to cold terms. You can work out in simple language a problem in algebra. In a few monosyllables you may be able to summarize market conditions and

the balance of trade. You can tell easily what time the train leaves, and whether it carries a parlor car, and the cost of a trip to Chicago. But can you put into words the meaning of the trip to some invalid faring homeward, or to a lover long withheld from his beloved, or to an artist with eyes alert for the glory of crag and torrent, moor and fen? As Ainsworth says: "It is our duty to put a thing into a nutshell—if it is no bigger than a nut. But when we try to put illimitable truth into a nutshell we leave a good deal of it out."

Did you ever attempt to set down in language a selection of music and why you enjoyed it. That popular description of the "Messiah," over which some of us have laughed and some shed tears, is an attempt to achieve the impossible. Language has no symbols adequate to portray such things. Never can we tell the best of what we see and hear. Just here is the happy hopelessness of the lover. The shallower his love the more fluently he can talk about it. But if he be a great lover, and you ask him to explain his felicity or his pain, he will shake his head helplessly. The Brownings drained human speech for description of exalted passion. Yet at the end you hear Robert crying, "Oh, thou soul of my soul!" Was ever any hungry heart fed and

filled with things *said?* Try to tell a woman that you love her, and the less fluently you succeed the better she will love you. Jesus himself did not come as an argument for anything. Indeed, it may be said that he came not to *tell* folks anything. He came, rather, because the world had been told all that could be told. If you remind me that John refers to Christ as "the Word," I reply with reaffirmation that the genius of Christ is not to be found in things that he *said.* He did not *bring* words: He *was* the Word.

But I've in mind a third instance of the unworthy demand for "more light." It is in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. "Send Lazarus," pleaded the man in torment, "that he may testify." And Abraham replied, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." If only there were some more compelling word that could be spoken! This is the real misery of many an apparently earnest seeker, that nothing additional can be *said*: "If you love me, tell me so," cries mother or child or lover. Everybody except veritable curmudgeons enjoys being told of love. But sometimes the cry is an indictment of its utterer. What mean all a woman's denials for her boy, what her travail to give him life,

what her watching and prayers if, in the event, he must needs be informed *in words?* "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" protested our Lord when that other requested greater revelation than Jesus had furnished; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Ah, we have seen enough, heard enough, felt enough, been blessed enough *already.* The difficulty is not with inadequacy of revelation, but with our stupid or willful hearts. Not "more light" do we need, but more readiness to use the light already shining.

XXX

IN JOSEPH'S GARDEN

On one of the grayest days of history General Pershing stood reverently at a certain notable tomb. He represented a nation awake at last. He had traveled far. He spoke for a hope long deferred. And he waked the echoes in the soul of a bleeding people as he said, "Lafayette, we are here." That was all he said, but I question if an elaborate oration could have compassed so much as did that cluster of words which sprang into bloom on the lips of a soldier from overseas. More might have been less on such tense occasion. "Lafayette, we are here." I can imagine just such words breaking out of the hearts of a few devotees, on the first Easter morning. They had lived so much since Friday at sundown. One never can measure time by a clock. Sometimes an hour seems an eternity. Jewish law had tied the restless feminine hands all Saturday. Throughout that interminable day, and the still more interminable night, their dead Friend seemed to be calling them. They felt centuries older when the Easter sun "lit

Orphel red." But with the break of day they were at the rock-tomb in Joseph's garden. And whatever their actual greeting, or if they said nothing at all, this was the cry that lay sobbing in their hearts: "Master, we are here —we are here!"

That was the reason for their coming—*just to be near*. Burial spices were chiefly a redolent witness that, though late of necessity, his friends had arrived. And by the same token I can guess where some of my readers will spend part of their Easter. They will choose Easter because the Easter sun, if it shines, may seem to mitigate the chill of the bleakest place on earth. I do not think we ought to spend much time in cemeteries. It is not fair to the dead. Could they but speak, they would order us back to the tasks they left unfinished and the tools which the frost struck from their fingers. Fortunate for my work in life, loving my lost friends as I do, I have always felt *nearer* to them, with a photograph before me or a yellowed letter in my hands than beside their silent dust. The individual heart has its way, however. And I know that some will make tender pilgrimage whither they may say, as if to be heard by sleeping ones: "Beloved, we are here!"

So much for the Easter mood which a beau-

tiful Scripture honors. Now for the Scripture itself. "Behold the place where they laid him." I have no thought that the Easter pilgrims needed *direction.* They knew every foot of the way. They had been traveling it all night while they waited for morning. They could have identified it among a thousand. The heart tells things the mind cannot phrase. But whether or not they needed *direction,* be sure their hearts leaped at the *invitation.* Between the two are such lengths of difference. Sometimes you cannot remember a *direction* five minutes afterward, whereas an *invitation* leaves an abiding glow.

The genius of Christianity is *invitation.* Mohammedanism says "Go to Mecca!" Buddhism exhorts, "*Find* Nirvana." Christian Science admonishes, "Buy a copy of Mrs. Eddy's book and wind your way through its mazes." Jesus *invites,* "Come—follow me." You can always do that. You can follow a *guide* when you cannot make sense of the most explicit *directions* ever printed. I have sat down hopefully with such a detailed list. The instructions looked as plain as noonday until I attempted to follow them. But you can follow a leader any time, and almost anywhere. With somebody to *show* you, you can do anything, almost. That's the gospel way. It

takes the matter out of a book and sets it lustrous in the face of a Man. Instead of a road-map it reveals a Hand. I recall days when my problem would not work. The harder I tried, the more perplexed I became. I simply could not get the correct answer. Then, if I had the wise sort of teacher, I took my problem to his desk. He *showed me how.* And I went back to my seat with a new feeling of competence. *Now* I could do the thing I had despaired of. That is Jesus' kind of religion. And the Easter morning invitation to the women was like Jesus. One can fancy the eagerness with which they accepted it. "Behold the place where they laid him."

Notice also the *form* of the invitation. At a spiritualistic seance you expect the lights to be dimmed and a curtain between you and whatever is happening. For some reason as occult as the science itself the wonders of spiritism need to be performed in the dark. You never *see* the hand that writes the message from beyond. For me the curtain and the low lights have always been an affront. I want to *see.* I long to be *shown.* Perhaps you can wait long for an answer to a *head-question.* With the *head* you can believe many useful and ornamental things—on testimony; but with the *heart* the case is different.

With the *heart* you must hear a voice or feel a hand or see a face. The heart hails from Missouri and requires to be shown. And when we put our question up to Jesus he undertakes to show us. I do not mean that mystery is banished by the gospel, else were it less profound. Nobody knows *why* a lily is white, why crystals take hexagonal form, why gravitation pulls. But you may hold a lily in your hand, and count the facets of a crystal, and feel the majestic clutch of gravitation. God lets us see all that we *need* to see. Faith is not a substitute for sight; it is a way to sight. We believe not because we cannot find out, but in order to be helped to learn what the heart is needing. The Easter challenge is typical. "Behold the place where they laid him." Make sure!

But dig deeper. Those sorrowing, spice-laden women had come not to see a *place* but to touch a *Friend.* Burial things were for use on a loved form. And the invitation to "Behold the place" meant that *he was not there.* For the moment they cared not why or where he had gone. For the moment all they realized was *that* he had gone. Dead or alive, he had gone! Some day your friend goes out of your house. Maybe you sent him with your blessing, choking back the pain of

loss. But now he is gone—gone! All you can feel is the bleakness of the house. Some day your boy builds his own home-nest. You did not try to detain him. You helped him pack, and kept a song on your lips, and kissed him away with a smile. Then you went back into the house and ached and ached—and ached. God, how you miss him! Some day the light fades from your heart; light of confidence, light of hope, light of love. Never mind what put out the light. The cold *fact* is that what is left is the dark. Just the dark. Then you can understand how the women felt, on Easter morning, when they were invited to behold the place from which their Lord had gone. *Later* they would be glad. Later they would be proud, Just now all they could realize was their loss of him. No sweet use for their burial spices, even.

No, thank God! No use for burial spices. So we come to the joy of that morning. I am sure the herald of such incredible news must have loved to watch the joy mount in the women's faces. So much vaster the event than the women had come for. No use for cerements and spices. *He was not there*, in Joseph's sepulcher. He did not stay "where they laid him." Thrice precious irony of Easter! Christianity has been exploded so

many times it ought to be helpless by now. Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, Payne, Hume, Strauss, Bolingbroke—the list of destroyers is long and brilliant. Each did his deadliest. But no part of the life and truth of Jesus stays *buried*. No cause into which his redeeming blood has gone remains sepultured. You can *bury* goodness, but it will not *abide* under the sod. You can crush truth to earth, but it rises again. You can bruise love, but only to liberate its fragrance. You can crucify—but that is not the end of Christ. Some day, with a shout, we shall point to the tombs in which men put him away. "Not here! . . . Behold the *place* where they laid him."

XXXI

A LITTLE FARTHER

STRANGE how old phrases stick in a chamber of memory and then suddenly reappear! Years ago, when my father wished to convey the idea of a short distance to a neighbor's or a trout stream or the forge near the gate, he would describe it as "a stone's throw." For ordinary purposes the phrase was quite explicit enough. It never occurred to me to pace off the remove. But the moment one begins to examine them critically the words are disappointingly vague. Much would depend upon the thrower—whether "Christy" Mathewson or myself. Still more would be determined by the size of the missile. And more yet upon personal interest in the object "a stone's throw" distant. Not in rods or miles can real spaces be computed.

> "Oh, the little more, and how much it is,
> And the little less and what worlds away."

Sometimes a mile is more than a thousand; and again the distance to Mars seems but a handbreadth.

Between the convict's cell and the street where his brothers walk free and glad merely a few inches of stone. Measured by linear units, the distance is nothing; but in terms of spirit the space is almost incalculable. Some day the felon walks out. In a few seconds he retraces the steps which separated him from the outside world. Yet the rest of his days may prove too few to win back what he lost when he passed the grim portals going in. A stage-setting in a play popular some years ago, showed chairs ranged in a line across the living room. One side of the room belonged, thenceforth, to the husband, the other side to the wife. Merely a divisive row of chairs. Yet what long reaches of misunderstanding, of wordy bitterness, of shattered faith, those separating chairs implied. So stubborn are we, so unforgiving that sometimes we would rather make an actual journey around the world than to reach forth a hand across intervening inches. Usually it is not *miles* that separate you from your friend; it is doubt or unfairness or revenge. One need but walk down the street or cross a room or pick up a telephone-receiver. The *physical* distance is nothing: it is *soul-distance* that counts.

On the other hand, what are miles when the heart deeply loves and greatly trusts? Years

ago across the continent, from beneath the soft skies of southern California, came a few penciled lines—trembling, shaky lines—for death had marked my friend. "Dear boy," he wrote, "my heart cries to you across three thousand miles." Miles? What are mere miles when one has a friend like that? The breadth of a continent distant; yet seemed he to be looking into my eyes, as I read; and his familiar voice calling in my ear. Then, soon, he went the journey men call long. Yet has he seemed nearer, often, than the conductor who collects my fare or the postman who delivers my mail. "What's time?" challenged Browning, "man has forever." So affirm our hearts at their best. What's distance? Leave that for such as never have greatly loved a friend. The heart says "Here!"

But my theme was suggested by the New-Testament use of the familiar phrase, "a stone's cast"; and particularly by its reference to a familiar Figure. 'Tis an immortal garden scene upon which the words usher us. A garden—and a Man who, on a certain black night, went forward from his intimates "by a stone's cast." Or, as another annalist expresses it, "He went a little farther." How inept are arithmethical tables to compute that distance! So near was he that his friends could

hear his voice as he groaned out his Gethsemane prayer; yet so far removed in thought and feeling that he seemed in another world from Peter's and from John's.

"A stone's throw" farther! And he had come so far already. I mean, in spirit. Beyond the dreams of his beautiful mother, beyond the hopes and fears of his friends, beyond the visions of prophet and priest; nay, clear beyond the askings of the wonderful age in which we live—so far had he traveled, *in soul*, to reach the place from which the Record says that "he went forward a little." Some there were, there have been such always, who said he had come far enough; that he might have kept out of Gethsemane, and evaded Calvary, and still be the world's Redeemer. I do not know. Perhaps if I were Schleiermacher, or Ritschl, or Heim, I could say. Not being a theologian, I do not know. All I know is that, when many would have declared he had come far enough he went a little farther to claim his crown.

Why not? That is life at its noblest, notwithstanding the south-wind philosophies of our day. I see written in the very fiber of things the necessity which drove Christ forward. Earth's most imperishable rewards are won only by those who dare to press further

in some Garden of Anguish. One never can take the crowd with him to any real triumph. He must go alone, if only "a stone's throw." Nearly every great invention represents the extra journey of some indefatigable spirit who declined to drop the trail where others were weary of it. Printing press, ocean cable, telephone, storage-battery, radium, wireless, together with a thousand finer because more spiritual achievements, bear the names of men and women who never timed fidelity by the clock or measured privilege in miles. Always the pupil must try to surpass his teachers. He must go beyond them in order to find his unique place in the world.

When MacDowell began to write music, he gave great annoyance to the critics. They would have liked him better if he had stuck to the careful traditions of his art. I can hear them cry him back, threatening him with their excommunication if he kept on. But the young composer gave heed, rather, to the forward voice in his own soul, and "went a little farther," to a chief place among American musicians. There is no easier way either to praiseful fame or to the putting of song into the heart of the world. Always the need of the extra "stone's throw."

Some day a mother falters in her huge task.

I do not blame her. I smile when I realize how free we "mere men" are with sage counsel to the women who pay the price for children. Rare is the man who would go half as far as good mothers go. God must have put into the heart of a real woman elements which he left out of a man. This is what Rosalie would not admit, in Hutchinson's great story, until her heart had been broken. But some day, even a good mother falters, as Monica, perhaps, did when her pains and prayers for Augustine seemed wasted. God forgive the children who ask so much—nor are grateful when they get it! But God keep vivid before the dismayed mothers who feel that they have come far enough, that kneeling Figure in the garden, who, for sake of lost boys and girls, that he might bring them and their parents to his Father's House, with joy, went "a little farther" that anguished night.

And the rest of us, *en route* to the Father's house? "Always do a little more than you have to." Shall that maxim apply to the factory and not to the church? To the hand but not to the soul? The genius of the *world* is to be as good as the other man. The genius of *Christianity* is to be as good as one can. As good as we *can* be, so good are we required, by the inner law, to become.

"Count not the steps already trod,
But onward urge thy way."

For thy soul's sake, always "a little farther." Unless our Lord had gone forward a little in the garden he must have gone back a great deal. To be *almost* Christ, and *not to be* Christ! 'Tis the difference of the "stone's cast."

XXXII

THE DIVINE CYCLE

"Author and finisher," said Paul concerning God's stake and part in the human life-story. And again "Alpha and Omega"—the beginning and ending of the alphabet of wisdom and growth. Inception implies consummation, so far as we permit, where God is involved. Without any particular compliment to Mr. Bryan, I stoutly repudiate that crude evolutionism which represents the Unknown as conducting a vast series of creative experiments, many if not all of them futile; and finds scattered abroad the vestigia of God's bootless journeys, rock-testimony to forms discarded—like the incomplete sculptures in a studio or the cast-off devices of an inventor. For me, creation is so stupendous a process that it includes the myriad apparently outworn types which the spade recovers for us. From fire-mist and whatever preceded it to perfected manhood, after the manner of Jesus, and to all that lies beyond, God leads on, through ages immemorial, seeing his way "as birds their trackless way," and vastly

more certain than the birds to arrive. I never think of him as thwarted, in our human sense of the word, but as making "even the wrath of man to praise him." Not the obduracy of any other material with which God works, but the hardness of the human heart alone stays his hand. "In the beginning God"; so the Great Book opens. And so commences the alphabet of truth. Without such postulate we get nowhere in our reasoning. "In the beginning God"; and thus, in rythmic measured fashion, onward in the direction of that

> ". . . one, far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

God does nothing by halves. But I am thinking, just now, of his purpose and movement in human life, in the lives of individuals and races. Back in Moses' valedictory is rare glimpse of this wonderful truth: "He brought us *out* that he might bring us *in*." The allusion is known of all. *Out* of Egypt and *into* Canaan, through a wilderness, for a certain race of slaves. It is the epitome of a dramatic deliverance. It is more than that. It is the divine philosophy of human life in the dream and operation of God. *Out* of some galling bondage—*into* a land of sunshine and song—*through* a discipline as long as Israel's wandering

in the desert, perhaps—such is the process. It is God's wonderful way for a soul or a people. *Out*, for the sake of bringing *in:* never *in* without first the leading *out;* never *out* except with the purpose and ability to lead *in!*

'Tis the apparent aimlessness of life that crushes us. To get up in the morning, and eat breakfast, and go downtown: to drudge all day at uneventful tasks such as bed-making and dish-washing and mending; and to sleep eight hours, if permitted, in order to be physically equal to a repetition of a wearying routine—this kills the song in a multitude of us. Some days we cannot feel a purpose in the process. We seem to be marching up hill, and down again, and nothing to show for the journey. Said Emerson: "I am never confused if I can see far enough." Precisely. That is just the difficulty; few of us can *see far enough*, on the ordinary days of life. At least we cannot see far enough to make out the sense and coherence of life. To-day we are here. A few days, more or less, and we shall not be here. Meanwhile to keep moving! I do not see how any child of God can be happy in such a creed. But suppose you could believe that God does nothing by halves? That he never starts anything he cannot complete?

That life, as he intends, is a whole story—a bringing *out* in order to bring *in?* Suppose *that*, and you will get your song back.

But we must not omit the first part of the process. First, as with the children of Israel in Egypt, God must bring us *out.* And usually we protest the order, especially when it conducts through a wilderness. We are such wretched logicians that we expect Canaan to come down into Egypt. I recall, with a smile, how unnecessary I once considered the multiplication table. I was entirely willing to figure interest and do sums in cube root. But it seemed a pity to waste so many hours of a boy's valuable time over "nine times eight" and "eleven times eleven." Similarly I was eager to omit the practice of scales on the way to play "pieces" on the piano. I hated exercises. There was no music in them. Moreover, they tired my fingers. I wanted to be brought *in* without first being brought *out.*

God's way is different. He never attempts to bring *in* until first he has brought *out.* He never puts Egypt and Canaan into the same heart at the same time. First, he brings us out, with pain and weariness and disillusion, perhaps. In a sense, I suppose, human nature being what it is, the Great War was inevitable—and its terrible aftermath too. I mean that

the world does not come to brotherhood easily. There must be a struggle, darkness, agony while God is getting his Israel out of Egypt; and in particular while he is getting Egypt, out of Israel. 'Tis a long road, and a weary one, from Egypt to Canaan; and the wilderness has many perils. Once in a while I hear a mother say that her boy never gave her an anxious hour in his life. Bless her heart, she does not mean to tell a falsehood. Mothers have such heavenly ways of forgetting the heartaches their children cost them. I wonder if ever was a son who never made his mother's heart drip blood. There is so much of the beast in the best of us, so much to outgrow and leave behind on the way to manhood and womanhood! No short-cuts from babyhood to maturity! All the qualities that most glorify human nature must be wrought.

So with us of riper years. Always the bringing *out* must precede the bringing *in*. You cannot transport anybody from Egypt to Canaan, overnight. The supreme problem is not to get a soul out of Egypt but to get Egypt out of the soul. As someone says, it took but twenty-four hours to get Israel out of Egypt, but it took forty years of hard schooling to get Egypt out of the hearts of the Israelites. Days supervened in which Israel cried, like

children, for the garlic and melons of slavery days. Such days come to all, I suppose. Buried sins have an exasperating fashion of poking seductive faces up through the sod. One cannot leave his past and expect it never to run after him, enticing him. Wilderness days will be in which you protest the process, and wish with half your heart you were back in Egypt, undisturbed.

But Canaan! "He brought us *out* that he might bring us *in*." God does nothing by halves. Had he not been planning to bring us in, he would not have brought us out. God strips a tree of old foliage that he may clothe it anew. He drives back the snows that he may cover the meadows with grain. He asks none to quit Egypt except in view, and for the sake, of Canaan. When a certain, long-familiar building was being demolished in the interest of a more modern structure I protested inwardly. I loved the old and had not seen the plans for the new. But, depend upon it, God never demolishes except that he may rebuild, better and more ample. He knows the Canaan of the life to which he calls. If he were not intending to furnish somewhat finer than Egypt, he would leave us in Egypt where the leeks and onions grow. How we hate to grow old! We fight back the mere

signs of age. The years are imperiously bringing us *out*. And, according to the Christian hope, they are bringing us *in* also. Said Adams at eighty-six, "The old tenement is falling into decay, but John Quincy Adams is very well, I thank you." He was expecting to move *out*, but also he was planning to move *into* a more substantial residence. As Browning sang, "I shall arrive."

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Peck C. George

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Flashes of Silence

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